

WITHDRAWN

AN INTRODUCTION TO DRAMA

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TORONTO

AN INTRODUCTION TO DRAMA

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To
L. S. H.
AND
J. P. B.

PREFACE

An Introduction to Drama is intended primarily for college classes. It is planned for courses in types of literature and for advanced courses beginning a systematic study of the drama. For playgoers, and for the increasing body of people who read plays, it will furnish an opportunity for becoming acquainted with the principles and the progress of the drama.

The twenty-nine complete plays represent nearly every type which has been important in England and America together with certain foreign types which directly or through dramatic criticism have exerted considerable influence on the drama in English. For the inclusion and discussion of foreign plays we have no apology. The drama of western Europe has been increasingly international. From the tropes and miracle plays to the current popular successes, plays have been moved from country to country. Surely Sophocles, Plautus, Molière, and Ibsen are important names in a history of English drama.

The omission of plays by Shakespeare, on the other hand, has for several reasons seemed desirable. In the first place, high schools differ considerably in the choice of plays for special study; and it must be deemed unwise for an elementary college text to repeat plays which have already been studied intensively by some of the pupils. Again, to give Shakespeare proper representation would have expanded an already large book. And, finally, the plays of Shakespeare are universally available in cheap editions of sufficient variety and merit to afford every teacher a suitable list of plays.

In the field of dramatic history and criticism, we have attempted the difficult task of condensing into ten short chapters a body of fact which is usually treated under many heads. We have, in the main, selected plays of high literary quality, but we have considered them less as "mere literature" than as acting drama. In consequence, we have included an opera and have treated the history of the spectacle and the play with music. We have not only woven the story of English drama into its continental background; we have also tried to describe the stage and the theatrical conditions of each period and to show how authors, actors, and managers have been influenced by the life of the time.

In deference to the suggestions of the great majority of the teachers with whom we have consulted, we have omitted detailed comment and critical notes upon the plays included. Over-edited texts force the teacher into the embarrassing dilemma of repeating the textbook or of discussing relatively trivial points.

The dates given in parentheses after the titles of plays refer to the date of production except when they are printed in italics; in the latter case the date of publication is given.

In the difficult task of selection and criticism, we have exercised our own judgment whenever possible, but in many cases we have been guided by the advice of others. We owe a general obligation to most of the works listed in the Bibliography. Professors George Pierce Baker, of Yale University; Brander Matthews, of Columbia University; and David H. Stevens, of the University of Chicago; and President William Allan Neilson, of Smith College, have kindly reviewed and criticized our plan and our choice of plays. In certain matters we have sought the advice of Messrs. Joseph Wood Krutch, W. E. Schultz, Curtis Hidden Page, Emery Neff, and Oral S. Coad. We are also indebted to our colleagues on the English staff of Southern Methodist University and to certain of our colleagues

in other departments, especially Miss Dorothy Amann and Professors C. Franklyn Zeek and John S. McIntosh. Many of the living authors of included plays have added a critical or an encouraging word in sending their approval of our use of their work. Mr. Barrett H. Clark has revised his translation of Tehekoff's *The Boor* for this collection. To all these men and women we extend our thanks, and we absolve them from all responsibility for the errors of fact and judgment which must inevitably appear in a survey of so extended a field. We wish to thank Mr. R. R. Smith and Mr. L. W. Lamm of the Macmillan Company for much helpful advice and assistance in seeing the book through the press. For assistance in the onerous task of preparing the manuscript for the press, we wish to express our especial gratitude to the following assistants in the Department of English: Miss Ruby Mae Harbin, Miss Eunice Brooks, Miss Sarah Chokla, and Miss Mary Lamar.

The plan of *An Introduction to Drama* was conceived by Mr. Beaty. Mr. Hubbell wrote Chapters I, II, IV, IX, and X; Mr. Beaty wrote Chapters III, V, VI, VII, and VIII. Each author, however, has revised the chapters written by the other, and each accepts responsibility for the entire book.

J. B. H.
J. O. B.

Southern Methodist University,
Dallas, Texas,
April, 1927.

PREFACE TO CORRECTED FIRST EDITION, WITH INDEX

A few errors were corrected in the second printing and others have been corrected in the fourth. We wish to express our great thanks to Miss Mary Lamar for making the index which has been added to this printing.

J. B. H.
J. O. B.

September, 1929.

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For the modernized versions of *The Second Shepherd's Play* and the *Brome Abraham and Isaac* found in their *Representative English Plays* (the Century Company).

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AN INTRODUCTION TO DRAMA

INTRODUCTION TO DRAMA

CHAPTER I

THE STUDY OF THE DRAMA

I. INTRODUCTORY

The drama is one of several methods of telling a story. It differs from its rival, the novel, in that the story is not told directly by the author but is acted on a stage by actors before an audience. Properly speaking, a printed play is not a play at all until it is acted; that is, until author, producer, actors, and audience have all collaborated. Production upon the stage is the chief purpose, and the only sure test, of a play. Unlike the novelist, the dramatist is wholly dependent upon his actors, who in their turn are limited by the policies of the manager, the resources of the theater, and the tastes of the audience. Poems cast in the dramatic form but not intended for the stage, like Milton's *Samson Agonistes* and Hardy's *The Dynasts*, are known as closet-dramas. In spite of their poetic merit, such poems have little importance in the history of the drama.

The chief purpose of every writer of plays is to give pleasure to the spectators who come to see his plays; and the spectators come primarily to be amused. The audience wants to be told a good story; it wants to be shown interesting people doing interesting things. Only a few dramatists like Ibsen and Shaw have regarded it as their primary duty to instruct, and even they are careful always to weave their ideas into an interesting story. The serious dramatist, while admitting the necessity of giving pleasure to his audience, generally regards it as his duty to give a faithful representation of life as he sees it. He shows us a cross-section of life which interests him, and he tries to make us feel the emotions it has aroused in him.

II. THE AUDIENCE

The novelist and the poet write for the solitary reader; the dramatist writes for the crowd. A Henry James or an Edwin Arlington Robinson may ignore the tastes of the multitude and still find readers among the discriminating few; but if the dramatist ignores the tastes of the many, he soon finds himself without an audience. He dare not be too subtle, too intellectual, too literary, for his audience is interested in people rather than in ideas or style, in emotion and action rather than in thought. Victor Hugo once said an audience is made up of three classes: the crowd, which wants action; women, who want emotion; and thinkers, who want character. He might more accurately have said that all classes want emotion and action and that only a few care greatly for characterization.

The playwright's audience is subject to the laws of crowd psychology. The crowd is more emotional, more credulous, and less reasonable than the individuals

that compose it. It is partisan; it wishes its hero to win. Only rarely will an audience listen to a dramatist like Ibsen or Shaw who wishes to stir it out of its comfortable complacency into active thinking about any kind of intellectual problem. Ordinarily it cares little for subtle characterization, brilliant wit, delicate poetry, or consistent logic, though it objects to none of these qualities provided it is given the action and emotion which it craves. The great characters in drama are motivated by emotion rather than by reason; and they represent fairly simple types. The heroine is usually, like Juliet or Imogen, all loveliness, all purity; and the villain is often, like Iago, wickedness incarnate. The themes of great plays are usually simple, and they are often old. The audience likes to see the old situations and types of character reproduced with slight variation; it loves to laugh at jokes on all the stock subjects, to weep over the same pathetic situations.

The limitations of the audience, however, keep the playwright close to the fundamental interests of mankind—love, hate, ambition, sorrow, and fear. He deals with matters that are of immense concern to all of us as human beings and not as members of a profession or a social class. If the audience seems to the dramatist insensitive to many things for which he cares, there is one great compensation: his hearers are much more responsive than the solitary reader of the novelist or poet. A humorous line which barely provokes a smile from the reader may draw prolonged laughter from the audience. The screen scene in *The School for Scandal* is much funnier on the stage than in the study. The emotional response of one spectator reacts upon those seated near him, and so on indefinitely. So powerful is the contagious influence of emotion in the theater that probably every reader will recall having laughed or cried over some bit of theatrical claptrap which, had he read it alone in his study, would have disgusted him.

Audiences vary widely. Every actor knows that a matinée audience, composed chiefly of women, reacts in a different manner from an evening audience with its larger proportion of men. The little theater audience has its own special reactions, and so, too, has the vaudeville audience. In very large cities like New York and London, managers of theaters often make a conscious bid for audiences of special types, appealing to a fondness for the sentimental, the clean and wholesome, the *risqué*, or the intellectual. A Pittsburgh audience differs from an audience in Los Angeles or New Orleans. Differences between American and European audiences often make it necessary to rewrite an English or a French play when it is put on in this country. The negro dialect of Drinkwater's *Abraham Lincoln* served well enough in Birmingham and London but not in America, where the speech of negroes is better known.

Audiences react differently in different periods. The Elizabethan audience laughed at imbeciles, cripples, and the insane; and it delighted in bloodshed. One of Pepys's comments reveals the Restoration attitude toward Shakespeare: "To the Duke of York's house and saw *Twelfth Night*, as it is now revived; but, I think, one of the weakest plays that ever I saw on the stage." In Restoration comedy the rake was often the hero; in the sentimental comedy of the period which followed the rake became the villain. The modern audience differs markedly from the audiences of Sophocles, Shakespeare, and Racine in that it cares little for poetry or for the beauty of the spoken word in any form.

Changes in the audience greatly affect the writing of plays. The emancipation of women has brought to the stage a new type of heroine. Nora Helmer's revolt would hardly have been possible on any stage before the nineteenth century. The Roman drama pandered to the taste of slaves and freedmen; and it is not surprising that the Roman audience preferred the rough humor of Plautus to the delicate charm and poetry of Terence. On the other hand,

the audience of Racine was too aristocratic; hence the artificiality, the over-niceness, the frigidity of his plays—perfect as they are in many ways. Molière, however, wrote, like Shakespeare, to please all classes; and his plays have more of the elements that make for universal appeal. Ibsen's lack of popularity in America thirty years ago may have been due in large part to our lack of the intellectual class to which his plays appealed most strongly in Europe. The playwright cannot well rise far above the level of his audience.

III. THE PLOT

Since the majority of us are more familiar with the structure of the novel than with that of the drama, it may be well to compare the two modes of narration from the point of view of plot. The first obvious difference is one of length. The novelist has no limit but the patience of his reader—or the faith of his publisher in his selling qualities. The dramatist must limit his story to what can be presented on the stage in two or three hours. Hence arises the need of greater condensation, of more action, and swifter movement. The reading of a novel may be extended over several sittings and even protracted throughout a whole month if need be; the performance of a play is limited to a single evening. The novelist may present a large number of scenes; the dramatist is limited to a very few. He can seldom stage the whole story; he must limit himself to certain significant episodes that lead to a climax. As a consequence, a good play is more compact, better unified than most good novels.

Another difference between novel and drama is that the playwright must keep himself out of the picture. He cannot, like Fielding or Thackeray, come forward, interrupt the action, and tell the audience what he means by a certain scene or explain to them what is going on in the minds of his characters. He cannot point the moral; the play must explain itself. Or, we may say, the playwright must leave it to the actors to interpret his meaning correctly. If the producer and actors choose to misrepresent his meaning, he is helpless. His only recourse is to print his play and, like Shaw, explain his meaning in an elaborate preface—and then, of course, his play has become practically a novel.

The dramatist's compensation for the limitations of the theater is the far greater effectiveness of what is seen on the stage over what is read in the study. Every day we read in the newspaper, with little or no emotion, of happenings which would, if transferred to the stage, freeze our blood with horror or convulse us with laughter. We must imagine as best we can the scenes described in the novel; but the dramatist can actually show them to us. No other art-form comes closer to being an actual representation of life. A play is a deliberate imitation of life; and the dramatist may employ the resources of the musician, the painter, and the architect, not to mention the infectious power of the human voice, gesture, and action. When one remembers, further, the psychology of the crowd, it is easy to understand the tremendous effectiveness of a good play when it is well acted.

Certain critics have tried to discover a formula by which to determine the essence of drama. The most widely known theory is that of Ferdinand Brunetière, a French critic, who asserted that the essence of drama is *conflict*. "In drama or farce," said Brunetière, "what we ask of the theater, is the spectacle of a *will* striving towards a goal, and conscious of the means which it employs." Theatrical audiences, like crowds that gather in a stadium, want to see a contest. The conflict may be between persons—two men struggling for the same honor or the love of the same woman; it may be a conflict between an individual on

the one hand and an institution, a convention, or public opinion on the other; or it may be a conflict between two impulses in the mind of a leading character. Ibsen's *A Doll's House* illustrates more than one kind of conflict. There is a conflict between Nora and Krogstad, between Nora's real and her assumed nature, a conflict between Nora and her husband, and a conflict, finally, between her ideals and those of the conventional world. *Ghosts* and *An Enemy of the People* illustrate better the conflict between the individual and the world of convention. The theory of conflict applies to comedy as well as to tragedy. In fact, the chief difference between the two types lies in the dramatist's treatment and in the seriousness of the consequences that happen to the characters. The same situation, the innocent woman unjustly accused, occurs in Shakespeare's *Much Ado About Nothing*, a comedy; *Othello*, a tragedy; and *A Winter's Tale*, a dramatic romance.

William Archer, the English critic, objected to Brunetière's conflict theory that the formula does not apply to all great plays, that it does not fit Æschylus's *Agamemnon*, Sophocles's *Œdipus the King*, or Shakespeare's *Othello* and *As You Like It*. He proposed as more accurate the term *crisis*, which he believed covered the ground. "A play," he said, "consists of a great crisis worked out through a series of minor crises." The English dramatist Henry Arthur Jones objected that Archer's theory, like Brunetière's, does not fit all the facts. He suggested that we substitute the expression, "*up against it*," for the predicament of the leading character. This term, however, is so indefinite as to be worth little to the student looking for a criterion of what is dramatic. Professor George P. Baker contends that the two great essentials of drama are *action* and *emotion*. Incidentally, Archer himself admits that "the dramatic quality of an incident is proportionate to the variety and intensity of the emotions involved in it." Perhaps one can go no farther than this. Great dramatists themselves have spent little time in theorizing—in print at least—about fundamental principles. Shakespeare and Molière knew by long experience and by theatrical instinct what would be effective on the stage and what would not.

The effectiveness of a play depends very largely upon the playwright's selection of what to include and what to leave out. It is a mistake to include what is unimportant, irrelevant, or uninteresting. There are in every story certain implied scenes which the playwright is practically bound to show his audience. The technical term for such a scene is *obligatory scene*, or, to use the French phrase, *scène à faire*. *A Doll's House*, for instance, would be a poor play if Ibsen had not permitted us to witness the dramatic debate between Nora and Helmer in the last act. In fact, the play was written primarily for this particular scene. Certain scenes may, like this one, be demanded by the logic of the dramatist's theme; others may be imperative because they are dramatically effective; still others may be needed to justify a change of purpose in a leading character. In historical plays certain episodes may be too familiar to be left out. Cæsar's dying cry, "*Et tu, Brute*," was so well known to his Elizabethan auditors that Shakespeare included it in its Latin form. Drinkwater's *Abraham Lincoln* includes not only the assassination scene but also much of the familiar Gettysburg Address and the well-known conclusion of the Second Inaugural Address—although Drinkwater had to transfer the scene of the composite speech to the theater in which Lincoln was shot.

Ordinarily, as Horace long ago pointed out, an audience is affected far more strongly by what it sees than by what is merely narrated by one of the characters. Nevertheless the experienced dramatist knows that certain episodes are most effective when *not* shown to the audience. Victor Hugo once remarked that nothing is more interesting than a wall on the other side of which something is happening. The reader of *Hamlet* feels that the killing of King Claudius

is obligatory, but what shall he say of *Macbeth*, in which we witness neither the murder of Duncan nor the killing of Macbeth? Probably Shakespeare felt that it was more effective to let his audience imagine these scenes and witness only Macbeth with his bloody dagger just returned from murdering Duncan. It has been too much the fashion with the moderns to look down on the Greek dramatists because they never show us death scenes. It must be admitted that the deaths of Romeo and Juliet, which we actually witness, affect us more profoundly than those of Antigone and Hæmon, which are described by a messenger; and yet there is perhaps no scene in Shakespeare more powerful than that in Sophocles' *Ædipus the King*, in which Ædipus returns to the stage immediately after gouging out both his eyes. Æschylus could not, on the Greek stage, show us Agamemnon being murdered by his wife and her lover, but he does allow us to hear the victim's dying cries; and in *Little Eyolf* Ibsen follows the same method. In *Saint Joan* Shaw does not permit us to see Joan of Arc burned alive, but the description which he puts into the mouth of a spectator of the scene is remarkably effective.

Brander Matthews has written an interesting essay, entitled "*Hamlet with Hamlet Left Out*," dealing with plays in which the leading character has been kept off the stage all or nearly all the time. In Ibsen's *Ghosts* Chamberlain Alving, the real cause of the disasters that befall his wife, son, and daughter, has been dead for years before the rise of the curtain in the first act. Similarly, in Pintero's *The Thunderbolt* the dead brother and father is the mainspring of the action. In *The Emperor Jones* O'Neill found it more effective to keep Jones's rebellious subjects off the stage until the closing scene of the play. The never-ceasing sound of the tom-tom makes us feel the terror which the revolutionists inspire in the fleeing "emperor" more than seeing them could possibly do. In *The Dreamy Kid*, a one-act play, O'Neill deliberately omits the final scene of the killing of the outlaw by the police, much as Ibsen at the end of *Ghosts* brings down the curtain upon the unfortunate mother while she is still debating whether or not to carry out her promise to her now imbecile son to poison him.

An important question for the dramatist to decide is at what point in the story he shall begin. Shakespeare and other Elizabethan playwrights, who wrote for an audience that loved complex stories, usually began at or near the beginning of the story and showed the audience all of the interesting episodes possible. The same method is followed in Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus* and Drinkwater's *Abraham Lincoln*. Sophocles, Racine, and Ibsen generally give us what would be Shakespeare's last act. Their tragedies may well be called catastrophe plays. Racine, as Dryden put it, allows us to see only the end of a long race. Ibsen's *Ghosts* and *Rosmersholm* and Synge's *Riders to the Sea* show us only the last day or two of stories that cover many years. In *An Enemy of the People*, however, Ibsen begins at the beginning of the story. It should be remembered that on the Elizabethan stage it was much easier to change the scene than on the stage of either Sophocles, Racine, or Ibsen. One might indulge in conjecture as to what Shakespeare would have made of the story of *Antigone* or *Phèdre* or *Tartuffe* or *Ghosts*. He would almost certainly have begun at an earlier point in the story and he would have added more characters and very likely a second plot. On the other hand, Racine or Ibsen, handling the plot of *Othello*, would probably have begun the play as the story approached its tragic climax. The dramatist's choice of method should depend on the nature of the story and the effects he wishes to produce.

A good story, for the playwright's purposes, is one which contains much action, high emotional tension, and a conflict of wills. But a story is hardly to be called a plot until it has been ordered and proportioned to suit the requirements of the stage. Having selected a promising story, the playwright must

give it the proper proportion and emphasis. He shapes his story to emphasize an idea, to reveal a salient trait of character. He selects certain episodes for expansion; others he either omits entirely or brings in in retrospect only. He may add a sub-plot to bolster up his main plot, or, more likely, he may simplify the story with which he began. The ideal plot would be natural, logical in the sequence of episodes, well proportioned, with emphasis upon the right events, and as simple as the theme permits; and it would contain much action, with some elements of conflict and a strong emotional appeal.

The meanings of the terms *act* and *scene* have varied somewhat under different theatrical conditions. They are now nearly synonymous, for the contemporary practice is "one act, one scene." On the modern stage the most obvious units in the playwright's story are marked by the rise and fall of the curtain. A *scene*, which may mean all or only part of an act, includes all that we see between the rise and the fall of the curtain. The action is continuous throughout the scene. (On the French stage until recent years a new scene began with the entrance of each new character; in reality, however, the act was always a single scene.) Acts are the larger units into which the playwright divides his story; the usual number today is three or four; five, however, was the standard number until contemporary times. Many Elizabethan plays, including seventeen of the thirty-seven plays in the *First Folio*, were not divided into acts or scenes at all; and on the Elizabethan stage plays were performed without appreciable lapse of time between scenes. Owing to the absence of scenery, the Elizabethan playwright could shift his scene almost instantaneously. Contemporary dramatists sometimes divide their plays into scenes but make no act divisions at all. Examples are Drinkwater's *Abraham Lincoln* and O'Neill's *The Emperor Jones*. The Greek drama, properly speaking, had no act divisions, but the choral odes divided the action into episodes which might be termed scenes. Occasionally we find a contemporary full-length play, like Shaw's *Misalliance* and *Getting Married*, without any division into acts or scenes. The effect of such a continuous performance is very fatiguing. Shaw overlooked the fact that Greek plays are shorter than ours. The traditional division into acts is a very useful one. It enables the dramatist to give his audience a much needed rest. Furthermore, it forces his audience to look at the play in certain large segments which the playwright wishes to emphasize. The audience has the opportunity of reflecting on what it has witnessed, and so it is better prepared for the next act. The intermissions between acts have, moreover, the effect of bringing the audience back to life, to their normal outlook, and of giving them a standard by which to judge the truth of the play.

Regardless of act and scene division, every play must have a beginning, a middle, and an end. No two plays develop in exactly the same manner, but we may for convenience discuss the arrangement of the plot under the four following headings: exposition, complication (these two taken together constitute the beginning), the turning point, and the conclusion (or *dénouement*). The division of the play into acts and scenes should emphasize these logical divisions.

By exposition is meant answering the following natural inquiries of the audience at the rise of the curtain: What is the time and what is the place of the action? Who are the characters and what is their relation to one another? What has taken place before the rise of the curtain that we need to know in order to follow intelligently the unfolding of the story?

The time taken up in exposition depends upon the nature of the story and upon the proportion of the plot which the dramatist wishes to present directly on the stage. In the romantic story-plays of the Elizabethans comparatively little time is given to exposition, for the playwright usually begins at or near the beginning of his story. In *Romeo and Juliet* we witness the first meeting

of the lovers and follow their sad story until their deaths. In Ibsen's *Ghosts* and *Rosmersholm*, however, exposition runs throughout the play. These plays are made up largely of exposition because they are explorations into past causes of the present situation.

The exposition should be interesting; but it must, above all, be clear. Some spectators come late; some are stupid or do not hear well; others are talking or looking at the actors' clothes or the stage setting. It is no easy matter for the playwright to manage his exposition and get his story under way at the same time, as he must, or his audience will lose interest.

The playwright should avoid conventional and worn-out expository devices. The opening soliloquy or prologue which frankly told the audience the necessary facts was quite common in earlier periods of the drama. Euripides often used it; Shakespeare employed it in *Richard III*, and Milton in *Comus*. Their audiences, accustomed to the conventional device, accepted it in order to secure the needed information as quickly as possible; but the contemporary playwright must find some more natural method. Many convenient methods have become conventional. Favorite devices are the intensely inquisitive stranger, the confidant, the servant who talks freely about the doings of his master and mistress. Sheridan used the last method in *The Rivals* and Ibsen in *The Wild Duck*. Whatever method the playwright uses, he should be careful not to make his characters say what in real life they would not dream of saying. When the method can be used, exposition by action is highly effective. Shakespeare in *Romeo and Juliet*, wishing to tell us that the Montagues and the Capulets are bitter enemies, shows us a street brawl which begins as a quarrel between the servants of the rival families. Sometimes the scenic background of the first act may tell much about the people who appear against it. Excellent examples are Ibsen's *Hedda Gabler*, O'Neill's *The Emperor Jones*, and Synge's *Riders to the Sea*. Models of exposition, using various methods, are Pinero's *The Thunderbolt* and *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray*, Ibsen's *A Doll's House*, and Eugene O'Neill's *The Emperor Jones* and *Anna Christie*. Playwrights have seized eagerly on certain recent inventions, like the telephone, the telegraph, the typewriter (with stenographer attached), and the dictaphone—the radio will probably be the next—because they offer convenient methods of acquainting an audience with what has happened before the rise of the curtain.

A French critic of the drama, Francisque Sarcey, made the discovery that an audience is never skeptical concerning what it is told about what happens before the opening of a play. If there are improbable incidents in his story, the playwright would do well, if possible, not to show them on the stage. Sophocles wisely decided not to show his audience the earlier events of the story of his *Œdipus the King*. Even a Greek audience would have rebelled had it seen Œdipus even unknowingly kill his father and marry his mother. Possibly the story of Shakespeare's *King Lear* would seem more convincing had the dramatist treated Lear's division of his kingdom as antecedent action.

In the first act the playwright must not only manage his exposition, he must also get his story under way. He must tie a knot which will be untied in the conclusion or *dénouement*. He must introduce some complicating force which produces conflict or leads to a crisis. The skilful playwright involves a character or group of characters in a mesh of circumstances, and he does this in a natural manner. Except perhaps in melodrama and farce, the playwright has no right to make his characters do anything merely because his plot requires it of them. Plot-ridden characters are never convincing.

Almost anything may suggest a play to the dramatist, but he is most likely to begin with a character, an incident, an idea, or sometimes a place. Perhaps the serious dramatist begins most frequently with a character or a group of

characters. Pinero once said: "The beginning of a play to me is a little world of people. I live with them, get familiar with them, and *they* tell me the story." If one's characters are to seem real, this is probably the best way to begin. What the characters say and do results from what they are; as Galsworthy once said, "Character is plot."

Somewhere near the end of the third act in the typical Shakespearean play we find a major crisis, or turning point, where rising action gives place to falling action, complication ceases and resolution begins. The ambiguous term *climax*, which is often used, refers more properly to the point of keenest interest, which ought to come near the end of the play. In such catastrophe plays as Racine's *Phèdre* and Ibsen's *Ghosts* the turning point in the Shakespearean sense obviously is past at the opening of the play; but even in *Ghosts* there is a point at which it becomes practically certain to the audience that the end of the play will be disastrous to the major characters.

The conclusion of a play is implicit in its beginning and should follow naturally and logically. Early in *Romeo and Juliet* it is evident that the lot of the "star-crossed lovers" cannot be a happy one—although the miscarriage of Friar Lawrence's letter to Romeo is a flaw in the logic of the tragedy. To change the ending of a play is, as Stevenson said of the novel, to change the beginning—to change the whole play, in fact. The happy endings which eighteenth century playwrights tacked on to *Romeo and Juliet* and *King Lear* show the grossest ignorance of the meaning and purpose of Shakespeare's tragedies. The skilful dramatist carefully prepares for his conclusion, foreshadows it, and leads up to it so that it will seem the inevitable result of the situation. The conclusion of *Romeo and Juliet* is admirably foreshadowed in the second balcony scene. Just before Romeo's departure into exile, Juliet says:

O God! I have an ill-divining soul.
Methinks I see thee, now thou art below,
As one dead in the bottom of a tomb;
Either my eyesight fails or thou look'st pale.

At one time the Elizabethans liked bloody endings such as we see in *The Spanish Tragedy* and *Hamlet*; at a later time they preferred the happy endings of *Philaster* and *A Winter's Tale*. On the modern stage, owing possibly to the large numbers of women in the audience, the popular playwright does not often dare to end his play unhappily even if the logic of his theme requires it. The producer of Hatcher Hughes's *Hell-bent for Heaven* substituted a questionable ending for the tragic conclusion which the author had written. Worst of all endings is the *deus ex machina* (god from the machine) ending. Euripides, having brought his characters into a situation difficult to solve, often brought in a supernatural power in order to make a satisfactory ending. Molière's masterpiece, *Tartuffe*, has a similar ending in that the king plays the part of the god from the machine. An equally objectionable conclusion is that of Shakespeare's *As You Like It*, in which a happy ending is brought about by the highly improbable change in the character of the younger duke and of Orlando's brother Oliver.

Just here it may be well to remind ourselves that, while in the printed play the dialogue seems to be the main thing, in the acted play the action bulks very large. Much of the stage business is given only in acting versions—every student of the drama should study carefully the acting version of some favorite play. The purpose of the printed stage directions in the contemporary plays given in this volume is not only to suggest some of this action but also to make the play more readable. The printed modern play is intended for people accustomed to reading novels. Ibsen was the first to give full stage directions for

the benefit of the reader. Shaw carries his stage directions to an almost impossible length. He adds incidents that do not appear in the play at all, and he even preaches at the reader. And yet what would we not give for such stage directions to *Agamemnon*, *Tartuffe*, and *Hamlet*!

IV. CHARACTERS AND ACTORS

The novelist creates his characters without reference to the difficulty of representing them on the stage; not so the playwright. If, for instance, the playwright wishes for hero a gigantic athlete like Ferrovius in Shaw's *Androcles and the Lion*, he should know that a suitable actor can be secured for the part. If he writes a play with a negro as the leading character, he is fortunate if, like O'Neill, he finds a talented negro actor in Charles Gilpin to play the leading rôle in *The Emperor Jones*. Good acting may save a very bad play from being hissed off the stage, and no play is so good that it cannot be ruined by bad acting. There are, however, three great plays which are, according to Brander Matthews, almost actor-proof: *Hamlet*, *Tartuffe*, and *The School for Scandal*.

Time and again one finds plays which do not read particularly well that can be acted with surprising effectiveness. Even the plays of Shakespeare, after we have studied them for weeks in the classroom, always reveal unsuspected effects when put upon the stage. One reason for this is that the printed dialogue is only a part of the real play. The dialogue, as George P. Baker observes, is only a kind of shorthand which the actors must interpret in appropriate action. "Actors," says Henry Arthur Jones, "are on the stage to fill in a hundred supplementary touches to the author's ten." To the printed dialogue the actor must add action, gesture, pauses, and the right tone of voice. To take a single example, in *Lady Windermere's Fan* Lady Agatha in all her thirteen speeches says nothing whatever except "Yes, mamma"; yet every one of these speeches must be spoken differently.

It is not essential that the playwright should himself have had experience as an actor, but it is essential that he know what actors can and cannot do. Æschylus, Shakespeare, Molière, O'Neill, and many other playwrights have had experience as actors; and others, like Ibsen and Drinkwater, have been directors. Great dramatists have, in the main, written their plays with definite actors in mind for at least the leading parts. Shakespeare created the leading rôles in *Hamlet*, *Othello*, and *Macbeth* for Richard Burbage. Molière wrote his plays for himself, his wife, and other members of his own company. He designed the rôle of Tartuffe for himself and that of Elmire for his wife, Armande Béjart. In more recent times Henry Arthur Jones wrote for Sir Charles Wyndham, and Rostand for Coquelin. Sardou, so Clayton Hamilton tells us, fitted his plays to Sarah Bernhardt's talents as an actress. "Three things," he says, "she does supremely well. She can be seductive, with a cooing voice; she can be vindictive, with a cawing voice; and, voiceless, she can die." The difficult leading rôle in Rostand's *Cyrano de Bergerac* was perfectly fitted to the versatile genius of the great actor Coquelin.

More often than otherwise the dramatist writes better when he has in mind a definite actor, but sometimes the shortcomings of his actors handicap him. Some one found fault with Sheridan for not including in *The School for Scandal* a love scene between Charles and Maria. Sheridan admitted that such a scene should be in the play—in fact, it is led up to in such a way as to seem almost obligatory—but he defended himself by saying: "I couldn't do it. Smith can't make love—and nobody would want to make love to Priscilla Hopkins!" As *Hamlet*, the middle-aged Burbage had one obvious shortcoming: he was fat.

This is the explanation of the Queen's remark in Act V, scene II of *Hamlet*, "He's fat and scant of breath." If Burbage did not adequately express Ophelia's conception of the Danish prince as "the glass of fashion and the mould of form," we may do well to remember certain wonderfully effective scenes which Shakespeare wrote because he knew Burbage could act them supremely well. Madame de Sévigné accused Racine of writing for la Champmeslé instead of for posterity; but Racine, as perhaps he himself knew, was surer of pleasing posterity when he chose to fit his leading parts to the great actress and wrote with the inspiration of knowing what she could do.

Great plays, like great novels, are great more by virtue of fine characterization than any other one thing. It is characterization that makes the chief difference between farce and high comedy, between melodrama and tragedy. It is great characterization that raised Shakespeare's *Hamlet* above the level of Kyd's old play on that theme and above Shakespeare's own *Titus Andronicus*. It is characterization and not technical skill that makes his *A Winter's Tale*, which has great technical weaknesses, a better play than the more skilfully constructed *Philaster* of Beaumont and Fletcher.

The playwright's methods of portraying character are precisely those methods which in real life we use in forming an estimate of a new acquaintance: we judge him by what he does, by what he says, and by what others say about him. What others say of a certain character in a play is most important in exposition. When Tartuffe appears, for instance, we know how to take him, for he has been the chief subject of conversation in the first two acts of the play. As in real life, however, we judge chiefly by what the character does; that is, by *action*.

In the drama characters are more likely to be types than in the novel. Within the limits of a three-hour play it is not easy to draw a full, well-rounded portrait of a complex character. Thackeray had a thousand pages in which to picture Becky Sharp; Ibsen had less than a hundred in which to present Nora Helmer. The stage, moreover, is a place where conventions of characterization readily take root. Clearly recognizable types are all that the average playgoer demands. He seldom seriously objects to the stock type of professor, absent-minded, with huge convex glasses; to the conventional Englishman with a monocle; or to the negro humorist with a preposterous dialect. He wants characters with obvious tags, like those of Dickens. Probably the average Elizabethan thought Jonson's "humorous" types as convincing as Hamlet or Lear.

The rarest type of great character, in drama as in prose fiction, is the developing character. By this term is meant not the progressive revelation of new facts about a certain character, as in Ibsen's *Rosmersholm*, but deterioration or development in character. So difficult is the developing character to portray within the limits of an ordinary play that there are few examples outside of Shakespeare. *Macbeth* is the classic example in drama, as Tolstoy's *Anna Karénina* is the classic example in fiction. Interesting examples in other plays are Zoe Blundell in Pinero's *Mid-Channel*, Brutus Jones in O'Neill's *The Emperor Jones*, Yank in *The Hairy Ape*, and Anna in *Anna Christie*.

Besides the leading characters, the playwright needs certain less conspicuous characters for background and for technical reasons. The Greek messenger was necessary because death-scenes always took place off-stage. The women in *Riders to the Sea* who bring in the dead body of Bartley are used for an obvious technical reason; in addition, they supply an effective bit of background. The skilful modern dramatist does not employ a large number of characters, as the Elizabethans did, but uses one character, when possible, to serve various ends. For example, Mrs. Linden in Ibsen's *A Doll's House* is used first in order that Nora may tell her (and us) about the forged note; she furnishes an excellent

contrast with Nora; and, besides, her love affair with Krogstad furnishes another example of false relations between women and men.

The skilful playwright is not content with creating real characters; he takes pains to group and contrast them effectively. In *The Thunderbolt* and in *The Land of Heart's Desire* we find a leading character standing very much alone, opposed to a group of conventional people who do not understand her. In Galsworthy's *Strife* the two leaders of the capitalists and the workmen are finely contrasted. The two wives of Sir Harry Sims in Barrie's *The Twelve-Pound Look* are equally well contrasted. Drinkwater's need of a member of Lincoln's cabinet who should represent the forces hostile to the president was so great that he actually invented a fictitious member for that historic cabinet. An interesting study may be made of the two family groups in Barker's *The Madras House*, the Huxtables and the Madrases.

It seems hardly worth while to insist that a dramatist's characters ought to be consistent, but the principle is often violated. Numerous instances may be found in the plays of Beaumont and Fletcher. Even Shakespeare is not blameless. The sudden conversion of Oliver and the younger Duke in *As You Like It* is explicable only on the ground that Shakespeare's plot called for a happy ending. The dramatist should tell the truth about what happened to his characters and not manipulate them so as to play upon our sentimental weaknesses. The last act of Barrie's *The Admirable Crichton* seems hardly the logical outcome of the years on the desert island.

V. DIALOGUE

Indispensable as dialogue seems in the printed play, upon the stage it is not nearly so essential as action. The moving picture manages to tell a complicated story with a minimum of dialogue, and the pantomime dispenses with even that minimum. Pantomime is still occasionally found even in serious modern plays. Two excellent examples occur in the first act of Moody's *The Great Divide* and in the third scene of the third act of Galsworthy's *Justice*. There are, however, many scenes the significance of which it is impossible to give without dialogue. The lamentable failure of many motion picture versions of novels and plays shows that there are many scenes which need dialogue to explain their real meaning. It is perhaps possible to make effective screen versions of *A Doll's House* and *The Scarlet Letter*, but it is not possible to reproduce upon the screen more than a hint of the debate between Nora and Helmer or of the conversation between Hester and Dimmesdale in the wood. Action may reveal emotion, but it cannot reveal thought. If the playwright wishes to convey ideas or to paint character in its subtle variations, he must have dialogue. The higher the type of play, the more dependent is the playwright upon dialogue. Slapstick comedy and melodrama are less dependent upon dialogue, and the wise moving picture producer sometimes seems to realize the limitations of his art-form.

The various dramatic functions of dialogue are: to carry forward the action and to explain its significance; to communicate to the audience facts which it otherwise would not know; to arouse emotion in the spectators; to reveal character; and, finally, to be, if possible, a thing of beauty in itself. Some of these points call for brief comment.

Without the aid of dialogue the playwright would hardly be able to portray any but the simplest types of character. What would Hamlet be without the many speeches in which he unbosoms himself to us? What should we know of Tartuffe or Prospero or even Brutus Jones if they revealed themselves only in

pantomime? Every day we characterize ourselves to our friends by a hundred little mannerisms of speech and gesture. The skilful dramatist crowds as many of these self-revealing touches into his play as possible.

Good dramatic dialogue supplies a powerful emotional appeal. Percival Wilde has said: "One quarter of dialogue might be called expression of facts colored by emotion; three quarters might be called expression of emotion colored by facts. Even exposition dare not be cold-blooded." All good art is infectious and every artist tries to make us feel what he feels. Human speech and action rouse a greater emotional response than can be aroused by any other artistic medium. A phrase which Wordsworth applied to poetry applies equally well to the dramatist's method of communicating emotion—"truth carried alive into the heart by passion."

In all plays that aim at literary effectiveness there is some attempt to make the dialogue a thing of beauty in itself. This fact in part explains why Sophocles, Shakespeare, Racine, and most earlier dramatists wrote their plays in verse. "If verse has any function on the stage," says William Archer, "it is that of imparting lyric beauty to passionate speech." Older audiences accepted the convention that there exists a noble race of men and women whose speech is verse. Even in English comedy, where prose has been more generally employed, the dramatist has tried to embellish his dialogue with wit, humor, and charm. Congreve and Sheridan treat speech as a thing of first importance. Modern audiences care little for brilliant dialogue and almost nothing for poetry—although one must not forget the Irish audiences that first listened to the rare beauty of Yeats's blank verse and of Synge's rhythmical prose. The modern playwright's aim is vividness and reality rather than beauty. In a notable letter to his future biographer, Edmund Gosse, Ibsen, who was a poet as well as a dramatist, tells why he had not written *Emperor and Galilean* in verse:

You are of opinion that the drama ought to have been written in verse, and that it would have gained by this. Here I must differ from you. The play is, as you will have observed, conceived, in the most realistic style: the illusion I wished to produce is that of reality. I wished to produce the impression on the reader that what he was reading was something that had really happened. If I had employed verse, I should have counteracted my own intention and prevented the accomplishment of the task I had set myself. The many ordinary insignificant characters whom I have intentionally introduced into the play would have become indistinct and indistinguishable from one another, if I had allowed all of them to speak in one and the same rhythmical measure. We are no longer living in the days of Shakespeare. . . . Speaking generally, the style must conform to the degree of ideality which pervades the representation. My new drama is no tragedy in the ancient acceptance; what I desired to depict was human beings, and therefore I would not let them talk "the language of the gods."

It must not be imagined, however, that dramatic dialogue, even in Ibsen, is exactly like the conversation we daily hear and hold among ourselves. Congreve was of the opinion that if a playwright were to put on the stage without change the extempore conversation of the two wittiest men on earth, he would find it but coldly received. Dramatic dialogue must have a directness, a charm, a conciseness that ordinary conversation conspicuously lacks. Our everyday talk is too diffuse, too rambling, too full of repetitions and irrelevancies to be effective in a play. On the stage even the uneducated display a marvelous ability to say what they think without fumbling for words.

In a notable essay, "The Philosophy of Style," Herbert Spencer maintained that the principle which underlies all effective writing is economy of the reader's attentive powers. The skilful writer tries to impart his thought to the reader so that the latter may get his full meaning, clearly, succinctly, and forcibly, with the minimum expenditure of mental effort. One might perhaps apply the principle of economy of attention not only to dramatic dialogue but to action,

gesture, costume, properties, and scenery as well. The principle of economy demands that, above all, the dialogue be clear and as compact as is consistent with perfect clearness. It should be vivid, interesting, natural, and colored with emotion.

Buffon's famous assertion that the style is the man—or, more accurately, that the style partakes of the man's personality—perhaps needs qualification for the drama. Obviously all the characters should not talk alike, as too often they do in the plays of Shaw or Racine, for manner of speech is an important mode of characterization. Shakespeare's handling of his comic characters deserves particular admiration. Dogberry in *Much Ado*, the nurse in *Romeo and Juliet*, and Falstaff in the two parts of *Henry IV* reveal themselves in speech which is colored with the speaker's individuality. Shakespeare's nobles, who speak in blank verse, too often talk in a uniform manner which has about it little that is individual—they all speak Shakespeare's own marvelous language. Polonius and Hamlet, however, are admirably opposed in their manner of speech, and so are Brutus and Antony. Shakespeare at his best manages not only to make each of his characters speak in a manner all his own, but he contrives to stamp every speech with the poet's own incomparable style. Oscar Wilde and Sheridan err frequently by endowing all their characters with their own wit; and Sophocles and Corneille make all their characters talk like orators or poets.

The playwright should beware of falling into conventionalized stage dialects. The speech of the stage Englishman on the vaudeville stage is preposterously unreal, and so, to a Southerner's ear, is that of the negro comedian. Contemporary dramatists have paid much attention to dialect. Eugene O'Neill's plays show a remarkable accuracy and range in dialect. It is no longer the fashion, either in the drama or the novel, to make all characters speak conventionally correct English. The slovenly, ungrammatical speech of a character immediately suggests a certain social status. Shaw, who frequently endows all his characters with his own incomparable wit, has some excellent examples of language employed as an aid to characterization. In his *Pygmalion*, the Cockney flower girl whom a phonetician attempts to pass off as a duchess, on one occasion gives herself away by the use of the slang expression *bloody*, which to an English ear is a peculiarly vulgar word.

The perfect phrase which adequately characterizes the speaker and at the same time expresses both thought and emotion is rare. We borrow two admirable examples from George P. Baker's *Dramatic Technique*. In an earlier draft of *A Doll's House*, Helmer, on Krogstad's return of the forged note, had said to Nora, "You are saved." In the final version Ibsen made Helmer say, "I am saved," admirably revealing Helmer's unconscious egotism. The second illustration is from *Hamlet*. Below we give the earlier and later versions of Hamlet's dying petition to Horatio. The latter version was selected by Matthew Arnold as a touchstone of poetic taste; it is an equally good example of dramatic phrasing.

O fie! Horatio, and if thou shouldst die,
What a scandal wouldst thou leave behind!
What tongue should tell the story of our deaths,
If not from thee? Oh, my heart sinks, Horatio;
Mine eyes have lost their sight, my tongue his use:
Farewell, Horatio, Heaven receive my soul.

O good Horatio, what a wounded name,
Things standing thus unknown, shall I leave behind me!
If thou didst ever hold me in thy heart,
Absent thee from felicity a while,
And in this harsh world draw thy breath in pain
To tell my story.

Robert Frost has told in his lectures how as a boy just discovering the beauty of Shakespeare's lines, he carefully annotated many speeches to indicate how they should be read. He gave it up when he awoke to the fact that nearly always the correct interpretation is implicit in every line. One who grasps Shakespeare's meaning sympathetically cannot go far astray. It is the business of the dramatist so to fill his lines with meaning that the actor cannot go wrong in his interpretation. It ought not to be necessary for the author to tell an intelligent actor how he wants his lines spoken, but in practice either the author or the producer must often explain just how the lines should be read.

VI. THE THEATER

Only in recent years has dramatic technique been thoroughly studied by scholars, and not until half a century ago was it realized that differences between the technical methods of Ibsen and Shakespeare are very largely due to differences in the theaters for which they wrote. The size, shape, equipment, and general arrangement of the theater all have some influence upon the construction of plays. The large theater, like the New York Hippodrome, seems best suited to spectacular shows or, as in the huge Greek theaters, to plays dealing with the heroic figures of myth and history. The small theater is best suited to domestic drama and one-act plays. College dramatic clubs and little theaters frequently fail to select the type of play best suited to the small auditorium. The Elizabethan theater, lacking a drop-curtain and painted scenery, favored the romantic story-play because of its ability quickly to change the scene from one spot to another. The modern theater, with its marvelous equipment in lights, properties, machinery, and painted scenery, has tempted the playwright to realism because it can represent accurately nearly any conceivable locality. David Belasco, one of the most resourceful of American producers, has said, "I believe in setting plays upon the stage with the nearest possible fidelity to nature." It is worth while to consider briefly certain important differences between the theater of Shakespeare's time and of ours.

On the Elizabethan stage the lack of a drop-curtain forced the playwright to get all his actors off the stage when he wished to close a scene. The modern producer brings down his curtain with any number of actors on the stage. He can lower the curtain immediately after the death of Hamlet or Juliet, but Shakespeare had to prolong the scene until he could remove in a natural manner the actors representing the bodies of the dead. The Greek dramatist had to face the same practical difficulty. The psychological difference in effect is worth noting. The Greeks and the Elizabethans brought their tragedies to a comparatively tranquil conclusion, letting the audience down from its high tension. The contemporary dramatist, however, closes while the feeling of the audience is at its height. Sometimes, as we have already pointed out, he actually closes with the action of the play incomplete, as in *Ghosts* and *The Dreamy Kid*.

With his elaborate scenery and heavy properties, the modern dramatist finds it difficult to change the scene of his story except between acts; quite often he is content without any change of scene whatever. Shakespeare could shift his scene almost as quickly as it is done in the motion picture theater. Consequently, his plays are full of action; they contain many characters and many changes of scene. It is quite impossible to perform *Antony and Cleopatra* on the modern stage without cutting the play to pieces, for the play contains no less than forty-two scenes.

Modern methods of lighting, first by gas and later by electricity, have wrought a great change in the very shape of the stage. The Elizabethan stage projected

out into the midst of the audience, and the actors usually stood at the front, surrounded on three sides by the spectators. The back, or inner, stage was probably too poorly lighted for frequent use. Modern methods of lighting enable the audience to see the actors clearly on any part of the stage. The front, or outer, stage of the Elizabethans has been gradually cut back almost to the footlights. The modern actor is now a part of a picture. He is in less intimate contact with his audience, and his acting is probably in some ways less effective than that of the Elizabethan actor, who stood in the midst of his audience. The marvelous realism of the modern stage setting, however, will seem to many adequate compensation for any loss.

We may note in passing that in the last few years there has been a reaction against the excessive use of properties and painted scenery. The writer of this chapter witnessed a performance of *Twelfth Night* at the New Theater in which the beauty of the opening scene kept the audience from listening to anything that was said. In that scene Viola Allen's fine acting was wasted on an inattentive audience. Some plays, of course, demand an elaborate setting, but in recent years there has been a reaction against over-elaborate stage settings. Arthur Hopkins once said: "Isn't it a palpable fact that the only mission of settings is to suggest place and mood and, once that is established, let the play go on? Do we want anything more than backgrounds? Must we have intricate wood-turning and goulash painting? If so, we have no imagination. . . . The whole realistic movement was founded on selfishness—the selfish desire of the producer or the scene painter to score individually, to do something so effective that it stood in front of the play and shrieked from behind it."

VII. SETTING

In early drama, as in painting and prose fiction, little attention was given to setting. In many of the scenes in Shakespeare's plays it is impossible to tell just where the action takes place. Gradually arose the conception of setting as an element of almost equal importance with plot and characters. The scientific emphasis upon environment has affected contemporary drama and fiction. In plays like Synge's *Riders to the Sea* and novels like Hardy's *The Return of the Native* the setting seems even more important than the other elements. Ordinarily, however, the setting is subordinated to either plot or characters. Its chief function is to forward the action, to aid in characterization, and to supply an appropriate atmosphere. The contrasting settings in Moody's *The Great Divide* help greatly to bring out the differences between East and West with which the story deals. There are fine contrasting scenes in Barrie's *The Admirable Crichton*, Galsworthy's *Strife*, and O'Neill's *The Hairy Ape*. In a well-known passage in "A Gossip on Romance" Stevenson has pointed out the close relation between plot and setting:

One thing in life calls for another; there is a fitness in events and places. The sight of a pleasant harbour puts it in our mind to sit there. One place suggests work, another idleness, a third early rising and long rambles in the dew. . . . Some places speak distinctly. Certain dank gardens cry aloud for a murder; certain old houses demand to be haunted; certain coasts are set apart for shipwreck. Other spots again seem to abide their destiny, suggestive and impenetrable, "miching mallecho."

The setting may greatly assist the playwright in portraying his characters. A room, for example, may be made to suggest the personality as well as the social level of the person who lives in it. The description of the cabin in Harold Williamson's *Peggy* throws light upon the family who live there. In Ibsen's *Hedda Gabler* the setting is dominated by a large portrait of Hedda's father,

General Gabler. Ibsen wishes us to remember Hedda's social position in the days before she married the conventional Tesman. Other plays in which the setting is a marked aid to characterization are Ibsen's *The Lady from the Sea* and *Rosmersholm*, Pinero's *The Thunderbolt*, Synge's *Riders to the Sea*, O'Neill's *The Emperor Jones* and *The Hairy Ape*, and Tchekoff's *The Cherry Orchard*.

Sometimes the setting exerts a strong influence upon character or plot, or both. The tragedy in O'Neill's *Beyond the Horizon* is due to the fact that each of the two brothers is in the wrong environment. The unadventurous brother who went to sea should have married and stayed at home, and the dreamer who settled down would have been happier exploring what lies beyond the horizon. In O'Neill's *Anna Christie* the sea plays an important part in Anna's regeneration. In Synge's *Riders to the Sea* the sea is of course the mainspring of the action; it is the source of livelihood of the fishermen and the cause of their deaths.

The relation of setting to plot should be one of emotional harmony or contrast. We like to have even the weather sympathize with our moods. The fog and rain in Ibsen's *Ghosts* make a fitting background for the gloomy tragedy, and the break in the weather and the rising of the sun at the end of the play seem to mark the end of a tragic episode. Sometimes the dramatist prefers a sharp contrast between action and setting. Clyde Fitch in *Nathan Hale*, the story of the American patriot hanged by the British as a spy, shows us in the last act an orchard in full bloom.

The setting may contribute effectively to the building up of a suitable atmosphere for the play. Atmosphere, however, involves dialogue and action as well as setting. The selection of details helps to determine the mood of the play. Ibsen's favorite method is the use of symbolism. The wild duck with the broken wing in his play *The Wild Duck* is an example. The cherry orchard symbolizes the social and economic status of the Russian aristocrats in Tchekoff's play; and the cutting down of the orchard at the close symbolizes the passing of the old order and the coming of a new. Maeterlinck's plays, notably *Pélléas and Mélisande*, are excellent studies in atmosphere. Yeats's *The Land of Heart's Desire* is an example of a play with a notable atmosphere which owes little to its immediate setting. The atmosphere is built up by the use of suggestion in the dialogue and by the introduction of the faëry child.

VIII. CONVENTIONS

Dramatic conventions are of three kinds: the permanent, which are found in all periods of the drama; the temporary, which belong to special periods; and the individual, for all authors tend to fall into conventional ways of doing things. The permanent and the temporary conventions need to be clearly distinguished, for they are easily confused. Professor Baker calls our attention to the fact that "almost everything which leading play-placers, managers, and actors have in the past twenty-five years declared the public would unwillingly accept or would not accept at all has become not only acceptable but often popular."

Every art rests upon the acceptance of certain implied conventions. In fact, the drama, like other arts, is of convention all compact. We cannot have opera without the convention that there exists a race of men and women who express themselves not in speech but in song. We cannot have painting without an agreement on the part of painter and spectators that an object of three dimensions may be represented on a flat surface. Even the sculptor, who works in three dimensions, asks us to believe that the motionless, hard, white marble represents the soft, moving flesh of human beings.

The dramatist likewise asks us to believe a number of things which are to the senses obviously false. In the first place, we must, when we witness a play, accept the convention that the actors are really the persons they pretend to be. In other words, we must play the game in the spirit of make-believe. When the dramatist asks us to believe that we are—while actually sitting in a New York theater—looking into a ranch-house in Arizona, we must coöperate with him; otherwise the play is no play for us. The audience has a tacit agreement with playwright, producer, and actors; it says to them in effect: "If you will give us an interesting story, show us interesting persons, we will accept the story as real and witness sympathetically what you show us; and we will accept as real your painted scenery, your imitation lightning and thunder, your stage banknotes, and your paste jewelry."

In its eagerness for a story, an audience is always willing to accept the convention that all foreigners speak English. In Shakespeare's *Julius Cæsar* or Shaw's *Cæsar and Cleopatra* we are not disturbed by the obvious absurdity that Cæsar speaks English instead of Latin. In opera we are not disturbed by the fact that the characters in *Lucia di Lammermoor*, which is based on Scott's *The Bride of Lammermoor*, speak Italian rather than English. Stranger things than these have happened upon the stage. In one performance of *Othello* Salvini, in the rôle of Othello, spoke Italian while Edwin Booth, who took the part of Iago, and the remainder of the cast spoke English. In another performance of the same play a similar thing occurred: Devrient as Othello spoke German while Booth and others in the cast spoke English. In this second performance one actress, who spoke English with a foreign accent, alternated between German and English, using German only in addressing Devrient.

On the stage the lapse of time is often treated in a conventional manner. In Galsworthy's *Strife* the action takes about six hours; in *Milestones*, by Arnold Bennett and Edward Knoblock, we jump from 1860 in Act I to 1885 in Act II and then to 1912 in Act III. Here the lapse of time falls between the acts and gives no one any particular trouble. But within the individual scene the time which is supposed to elapse is often not the time actually taken up in presenting the scene. For this reason clocks on the stage are rarely permitted to run. In the first scene in *Hamlet* the five or six hours between midnight and daybreak are condensed into some ten or fifteen minutes. Scene XIV of Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus* condenses an hour into about thirty lines. Here the tense emotional quality of the situation causes us to forget the time which has actually elapsed. Or shall we say that to us, as to Faustus, his last hour on earth seems unnaturally brief? Methods of speeding up the apparent passage of time are to fill the scene with changing emotional storm and stress and rapid action.

There are certain necessary and useful conventions in acting. The producer groups his actors to form interesting tableau effects and to fix the audience's attention upon the most important character. The actor uses more, and more pronounced, gestures than one uses off the stage. We accept the convention because it helps him to convey what he has to say more forcefully. The actor speaks in a louder voice than is normal, and he enunciates more distinctly. His stage whisper is not natural; yet how shall the audience hear him if he actually whispers or even speaks in his ordinary voice? Another useful convention is that the actor when speaking shall when possible keep his face toward the audience so that nothing he says may be lost.

Costume is more a matter of convention than one usually realizes. Almost any sort of costume can be made to serve. Nowadays we try to play *Hamlet* and *Julius Cæsar* in appropriate costume; but we are not consistent: we use Elizabethan English dress for *Hamlet*, the scene of which is laid in Denmark,

and Roman costume for *Julius Cæsar*, which is laid in Rome. Shakespeare's actors were content with the dress of their own day. London and New York recently witnessed performances of *Hamlet* in modern dress; and apparently the audiences accepted the convention without great difficulty, just as Japanese audiences accept the convention that attendants on the stage are invisible.

The soliloquy is a strange example of the temporary convention; it seems very unnatural, and yet its history reveals almost the vitality of a permanent convention. The practical value of the monologue is that it gives the dramatist a convenient method of telling the audience certain necessary facts which it is difficult to impart in any other way. The soliloquy is useful in exposition and in revealing the secret thoughts of a leading character like Iago or Richard III. The soliloquy is unnatural because, though men do sometimes talk aloud to themselves, they do not give elaborate explanations of their motives or intentions in any such manner. Ibsen in his later plays practically abandoned the soliloquy—and the even more objectionable aside—and the vast majority of present-day playwrights have followed his example. There is, however, one play which constitutes an amazing exception to the rule—O'Neill's *The Emperor Jones*. Of the eight scenes in this play all but the first and the last are in monologue. O'Neill in his other plays, however, makes little use of the soliloquy. Evidently he felt that the soliloquy was the only possible method of revealing to his audience what went on in the mind of Brutus Jones.

IX. DRAMA AND LITERATURE

The history of the theater makes clear a fact that students of literature are likely to lose sight of; namely that drama belongs only in part to the field of literature. In this respect it resembles oratory, journalism, and prose fiction. In the long and illustrious history of English literature we find a vital connection between drama and literature only in three or four periods, most notably in the age of Shakespeare. Yet even in the time of Shakespeare there were many plays which had no literary importance whatever. In France the connection between drama and literature has remained fairly close since the time of Corneille. That fact perhaps explains why English literature contains many closet-dramas and French literature few, for the closet-drama flourishes only in periods when literature is practically divorced from the stage. The great Romantic poets, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Byron, and Shelley, and after them the Victorians, Tennyson, Browning, and Swinburne, wrote excellent poems in the dramatic form; but few of these were ever acted, and none of them holds the stage. Two other very remarkable closet-dramas are Milton's *Samson Agonistes* and Hardy's *The Dynasts*. From this divorce of drama and literature, the drama has been the greater loser of the two, but the loss to literature has not been inconsiderable. The name of Coleridge, for example, might mean much more to this generation had he written a play which, like *The Rivals*, still holds the stage. Closet-dramas are written on older, obsolete models. Milton imitated Greek tragedy; Coleridge, Byron, and Tennyson imitated Shakespeare. The closet-dramatist, writing without regard for possible production, is usually very lax; he does not take pains to make his situations dramatic, his plot emotionally exciting, his dialogue vivid and compact. Even when judged as poetry, *King Lear* and *Antigone* are not inferior to *Prometheus Unbound* and *Atalanta in Calydon*.

Literary merit in a play is not dependent upon its being written in verse or even in polished literary prose. What makes a play live is partly the style in which it is written but even more the characterization, the atmosphere, the

human appeal of the situation. There is much fine writing, much brilliant wit in the plays of Sheridan, but it is not these things alone that keep *The Rivals* and *The School for Scandal* on the stage and in the classroom.

In the last analysis, no one has ever been able fully to explain just what qualities cause a classic to survive the submergence of all other plays. Perhaps Arnold Bennett is right in abandoning such general terms as truth, beauty, and universality of appeal, to say, "A classic is a work which gives pleasure to the minority which is intensely and permanently interested in literature." One thing is certain, however, that, as Clayton Hamilton puts it, "When a play, owing to altered physical conditions, is tossed out of the theater, it will find a haven in the closet only if it be greatly written." Literary merit, he adds, "is the only sure antidote against the opium of time." Conditions in the theater have so greatly changed that it is difficult to perform the plays of Shakespeare and well-nigh impossible to perform the Greek tragedies, but men still read them and forget even the names of countless popular plays of a year or two ago.

X. CONCLUSION

Our brief analysis of the dramatic art should have shown that it is as worthy of study as it is difficult. One might well maintain that Shakespeare's great tragedies represent the rarest, the most difficult achievement of the human mind. The great poetic plays of Shakespeare and Sophocles perhaps offer more to the student than any other literary form. By comparison, the lyric is slight and the novel almost formless. *Hamlet* and *Ædipus the King* offer the combined excellences of great poetry and great drama, great characters, vivid pictures of life in its great moments, and stories that always interest.

In reading plays, the student will do well always to bear in mind the fact that plays are written to be performed. He should visualize as well as he can the stage for which the play was written. An acting version of a modern play will be a great help. In all cases it is well to draw a diagram of the stage, marking the location of properties, windows, and doors. One might well use pawns for the characters and move them about during the reading of the play. The student should use every available opportunity to see a good play. He should avail himself of any opportunity to see a play in rehearsal, go behind the scenes, familiarize himself with the mechanical equipment of a theater, and see how a play is whipped into shape for a performance.

Last of all, we would recommend to the student who wishes thoroughly to understand the drama that he try his hand at both acting and play-writing. Such experiences will show him the difficulties of both arts and will greatly quicken his appreciation of great acting and great drama. A word of caution should perhaps be appended to this advice. Many young persons who are able to write a passable one-act play fancy that their vocation in life is to write. Let the ambitious student beware of taking himself too seriously as a creative artist; genius is as rare today as at any time during the past. If the student is a born playwright, there will be no stopping him by the time he has acquired some knowledge of his craft. If he is not a born playwright, he will at any rate have learned much about the art in which the world's greatest writer, Shakespeare, excelled.

CHAPTER II

THE DRAMA OF GREECE AND ROME

I. THE ORIGIN OF THE GREEK DRAMA

In every known country, the drama has its origin in religious ceremonial. All primitive races have some kind of dramatic spectacle, and this crude drama is invariably religious in character. The ancient drama grew out of the religious ceremonies of the half-savage Greeks; and our modern drama, born inside the walls of the medieval Church, is no exception to the rule. Yet, curiously enough, there are some who object to the theater as the invention of the devil, forgetting that there are good as well as bad plays.

— The Greek drama grew out of the worship of Dionysus, or Bacchus, the god of wine and vegetation. Attic tragedy had its origin in the Dionysiac dithyramb, a choral dance which probably had some mimetic features. In these dances the chorus and its leader probably represented the worshipers and attendant spirits grouped around Dionysus. The essential dramatic element, action, made its appearance without any one's realizing its enormous significance. Arion is said to have been the first poet to insert spoken verses between the choral odes. In these verses, which were spoken by the leader of the chorus, the germ of tragedy, so Aristotle tells us, is to be found. Thespis, the reputed father of Greek tragedy, added an actor to the singing, dancing group and thus made it possible to act out the adventures of Dionysus. In the course of time Thespis or others so extended the subject matter of tragedy that it was no longer limited to stories of Dionysus but might treat almost any religious theme or story.

In 534 B.C. the Athenian tyrant, or "boss," Pisistratus, who collected the Homeric poems, instituted the City Dionysia, an annual festival in March, at which tragedies were regularly produced in competition for a prize. The drama was thus brought under state patronage and control. Æschylus, the oldest playwright whose work has come down to us, made many important contributions to the development of tragedy. The most important of these was the addition of a second actor. With two actors on the stage, it was possible, with the assistance of the chorus, to stage a fairly complicated story. The dramatist could now place before his audience the essential dramatic scenes of his plot. When Sophocles, a little later, added a third actor, Greek tragedy had, on its material side, reached almost the height of its development. In the age of Pericles (b. 490 B.C., d. 429 B.C.) Greek tragedy, in the plays of Æschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides reached a greater height than has since been attained except in the plays of Shakespeare.

II. THE INFLUENCE OF RELIGION UPON THE GREEK DRAMA

In England and France the drama had no literary importance until it ceased to be a religious drama, but in Greece the theater was to the end a distinctly religious institution. Greek drama was the offspring of religious enthusiasm; and even at the height of its development Greek tragedy was the result of an

endeavor to beautify and enrich religion with the arts of poetry, music, dancing, and acting. The altar of Dionysus stood in the center of the theater, and his temple was close at hand. Plays were performed only at two annual religious festivals, in January and March. On these occasions the population of Athens gave up its regular pursuits and went to the theater. The Greeks observed their religious holidays much like modern Italians, who combine with real religious feeling the love of fun and spectacle.

On the opening day of the festival, which continued five or six days, an elaborate procession escorted the image of Dionysus, the patron god of the drama, from his temple to the theater. Only the last three or four days of the festival were given over to the performance of plays. Each playwright presented a group of three tragedies followed by a satyr-play. Among the Greeks comedy and tragedy, having different origins, were never mingled as on the English stage; and actors as well as playwrights always restricted themselves to one type. The state seems to have paid the actors, but rich patrons were called on in turn to pay the expenses of training and outfitting the chorus. The state leased the theater to individuals, who were permitted to charge a small admission fee to pay for its upkeep.

The playwright almost invariably took his plots from the familiar myths of gods and heroes. Many of them are taken from the *Iliad*. To the modern reader, originality of plot seems absolutely essential both in drama and prose fiction. But this insistence upon originality is a recent thing; Shakespeare borrowed his plots as freely as did Euripides. The Greek audience had necessarily little curiosity as to how the story would end but much as to the way in which the poet-dramatist would vary the familiar story. The novelty of a Greek tragedy was something like that of Shaw's *Cæsar and Cleopatra* for spectators familiar only with Shakespeare's *Julius Cæsar* and *Antony and Cleopatra*. Goethe, who in his *Iphigenia* and *Faust* retold stories familiar to readers of Euripides and Marlowe, said: "If I were to begin my artistic life over again, I should never deal with a new story. I should always invest the old stories with new and more vital meanings."

III. MUSIC AND DANCING

In early periods the connection between poetry, music, and dancing is very close, and Greek drama is a combination of poetic drama with music and dancing. Probably the closest modern parallel to Greek tragedy is not such a play as Shakespeare's *Othello* or Ibsen's *Ghosts* but, as Brander Matthews has suggested, one of Wagner's operas. The parallel seems all the closer when one remembers that Wagner drew his plots from Germanic myth and composed both words and music for his tragic operas. In the Greek drama, however, music and dancing were subordinated to the poetry and action of the play whereas in modern opera singers consider the words of so little importance that, even when an English translation is used, the actors take little pains to make the words intelligible to the audience.

Not all parts of a Greek play were sung. As in modern musical comedy, some passages were spoken while others were sung or perhaps chanted to the accompaniment of flute or harp. The passages sung were not limited to the choral odes but included lyrical duets, or *commi*, between actor and chorus. Essentially lyric passages, such as those expressing intense grief or joy, were always sung. For instance, in the *Antigone* there is a lyrical duet, or *commus*, between Antigone and the chorus just before she is led away to her death; and the chorus and Creon sing a second *commus* over the dead body of his son Hæmon.

The dancing of the Greeks was very different from that to which we are accustomed. It was not only religious in character but distinctly mimetic. It was an attempt to interpret by expressive postures, gestures, and bodily movements the emotions suggested by the words, music, and action of the play. "The real dancing of the Greeks," says Richard Green Moulton, "is a lost art, of which the modern ballet is a corruption, and the orator's action a faint survival. It was an art which used bodily motion to convey thought; as in speech the tongue articulated words, so in dancing the body swayed and gesticulated into meaning."

IV. THE CHORUS

The casual modern reader is likely to wonder why the Greek playwright always put a chorus in his play. As a matter of historical fact, it is more accurate to say that the playwright put his play into the chorus. The choral odes go back to the original Dionysiac dithyramb whereas the drama proper was developed out of the interpolated episodes, or interludes.

The twelve or fifteen members of the chorus were known as the *choreutæ*; the leader was called the *coryphæus*. The chorus generally represents a group of women or old men. Usually they are the same in sex and often in age as the leading character. In the *Antigone*, however, Sophocles very effectively contrasts his courageous young heroine with a chorus of cowardly and conventional old men.

During the dramatic episodes the chorus faced not the audience but the actors, and it probably accompanied the action with appropriate gestures. During the choral odes, however, the chorus faced the audience while it danced and sang. In the spoken dialogues between actor and chorus the coryphæus seems to have spoken for the chorus, but in the lyrical duets the entire chorus took part.

V. THE GREEK THEATER

All great plays written before the nineteenth century were written for theaters which would strike a modern audience as singularly destitute of properties, scenery, and mechanical equipment. The Greeks, however, like the Elizabethans, had more than the elder Dumas pronounced sufficient: "four boards, two actors, and a passion." If the Greeks lacked our theatrical aids to illusion, they supplied the lack with excellent acting, good music, appropriate dancing, and unsurpassed poetry.

The bare Greek theater proved no great obstacle, but it did to a great extent determine the nature and form of the Greek drama. The closest modern parallel to the Greek theater is a stadium. The theater was semicircular in shape and was built on the side of a hill so that each spectator might see the play over the heads of those seated below and in front of him. The Greek theater had no roof. The Theater of Dionysus in Athens was of such enormous size that, according to a widely accepted estimate, seventeen thousand persons could witness a single performance.

In the center of the semicircle there was a level circular space known as the orchestra. Here, near the statue of Dionysus, the chorus took its stand, while the actors stood immediately behind the chorus. Perhaps in the age of Pericles—certainly, at a later date—there was a raised stage on which the actors stood.

At the back of the stage stood a scene-building, which in the beginning was merely a hut or tent (*skene*, whence our modern *scene*), in which the actors changed their robes and masks before assuming new rôles. Later the Athenians

erected a more elaborate building of two stories with two or three doors to serve as additional entrances and exits. To a very limited extent, painted scenery seems to have been used in the later plays, but there was no drop-curtain. The platform (*logeion*) on the upper story of the scene-building was used, like the upper balcony of the Elizabethan theater, to represent a city wall or any other high place. In the later plays a machine was used to lower or raise aloft the actor who represented a god. The too frequent use of this mechanical device by inexpert playwrights who brought in the god merely to solve a tangled plot, led to the condemnation of the *deus ex machina* (god from the machine) *dénouement* as unskilful and unnatural.

One can hardly imagine such domestic dramas as Ibsen's *A Doll's House* on the Greek stage. The usual scene of the Greek drama is an open space in front of a palace or a temple, which was represented by the scene-building. The difficulty of presenting interior scenes accounts in part for the small number of pictures of domestic life found in Greek drama. The dramatist was frequently compelled to use a messenger to inform his audience of events which took place inside the house. Perhaps the Greek playwright's greatest difficulty arose from the fact that it was not natural for Athenian women, who led lives of almost Oriental seclusion, to stand and talk in a public place.

VI. THE GREEK AUDIENCE

No modern audience can be so thoroughly representative as that which gathered in the Theater of Dionysus. In Athens there was only one theater, and there were only two annual occasions on which plays were performed. Consequently the Athenian audience comprised practically the entire free population of the city, with the possible exception of women. They witnessed plays all day without intermission.

The Athenian audience was at once more noisy and more intelligent than most audiences of our day. The demonstrative Greeks sometimes behaved like a crowd at a football game. They expressed their disapproval by hisses, groans, stamping of the heels, and by throwing objects at the actors. Partisans of the various playwrights tried to influence the decision of the judges by prolonged applause and by hisses and jeers. Not infrequently the audience would stop the performance of a play and call for the next.

And yet probably no contemporary audience has ever shown itself more discriminating in matters pertaining to the drama. The continued popularity of Sophocles, who won many victories, speaks volumes for the taste and judgment of the Attic audience. If we may believe Cicero, the ear of the Athenian audience was so sensitive that if an actor stressed the wrong syllables in reading a line of verse, he was certain to be hissed. Today an actor speaking before a cultivated college audience might read Hamlet's farewell speech as though it were prose and run no risk of being hissed. No one would know the difference except perhaps a few specialists in English.

VII. THE ACTORS

Many of Shakespeare's plays could not be performed by the three actors to which Greek writers of tragedy limited themselves. Some of Æschylus's plays were written for two actors, and his earliest extant play, *The Suppliants*, makes almost no use of the second actor. The Greek limitation to three actors was not, however, so great a handicap as it first seems. The use of masks enabled

each of the three actors to play successively a variety of parts in a single play. Furthermore, in the conversations at least, if not in the action, the chorus often served as a fourth actor. In the *Antigone* there are nine characters to be represented by the three actors. There is also a boy who never speaks; the dramatist could employ as many mutes as he liked. There could be, however, only three speaking characters on the stage at one time. The limited number of actors and the continued presence of the chorus prevented the Greek playwright from staging such scenes as the battle scenes in Shakespeare's history plays or scenes picturing excited crowds like those in Ibsen's *An Enemy of the People* or Galsworthy's *Strife*.

The reader who is familiar with English closet-dramas, like Milton's *Samson Agonistes*, written in imitation of Greek tragedy, must not imagine that the Greek dramatist was a lofty poet who disdained all contact with the details of production. Æschylus and Sophocles, like Shakespeare and Molière, took part in the performance of their own plays. Like Molière again, the Athenian dramatists seem to have had an important hand in the training and drilling of their own actors.

Greek actors seem to have been selected largely for their voices. A strong voice and a distinct enunciation were considered essential. In fact, no one with a weak voice could make himself heard by an outdoor audience of several thousand persons. The Greek tragedians declaimed their lines with a loud and ringing intonation. What they strove for was not the realism of modern dramatic dialogue but effective rhetorical delivery of the poet's lines.

If we examine the diction of the Greek drama, we shall see that realistic acting would have been out of keeping with the dialogue. Greek tragedies were not written in what the Imagist poets, following Wordsworth, have called "the language of common speech." The language of Greek tragedy was highly artificial. The archaic Attic dialect used in the spoken parts harks back to the time when Greek tragedy was in its childhood. It was full of obsolete expressions with a liberal sprinkling of words drawn from the conventionalized Ionic dialect of the Homeric poems. The language used in the choruses was not Attic but a conventionalized Doric. The language of tragedy, says Haigh in *The Tragic Drama of the Greeks*, "was a curious compound of diverse elements artificially brought together. Nothing in modern literature can be cited as in any way similar. We may realise how alien is such a type of diction if we try to picture to ourselves an English parallel, and imagine a dramatist of the present day composing a lyrical tragedy, of which the dialogue was written in Elizabethan English, while the lyrics combined the dialect of Burns with the phraseology of Chaucer. The language of Greek tragedy was not less diversified; yet the general effect is far from being laboured or incongruous." The Greek audience accepted the conventional language of tragedy as modern American audiences accept the fact that Wagner wrote his operas in German; and they would rather have them sung in German perhaps than in English.

The actor's manner of delivering his lines, as one would expect from his language and dress, was more formal than one finds today. The speeches in Greek plays, like many of those in Shakespeare and Racine, resemble formal orations rather than conversation. Even in rapid dialogue, there is a tendency to pair off speeches of a line or a half-line with others of precisely the same length. Yet the dialogue of Greek tragedy, in spite of its artificiality, often possesses dramatic power as well as great beauty. It represents not the language of real life but what Ibsen called "the language of the gods." The chief aim of the modern dramatist in dialogue is realism, but Sophocles, like Shakespeare and Corneille, aimed at a lofty beauty which is ample compensation for the loss in naturalness.

The use of the mask enabled the actor to play several parts in a single play. It also enabled the actor to play more effectively the rôle of a woman. The inability of the male actor to supply little feminine touches seems to have led the dramatists to select principally the more masculine type of woman. Greek heroines are generally bold, direct, and manlike. Even in such notable characters as Antigone, Iphigenia, and Electra, one misses much that we find in Shakespeare's more complex and more lovable heroines, who, as it happens, were represented by unmasked boy actors.

Since the expression painted upon the mask was unchanging, the dramatist painted his characters in bold, broad strokes, with few of the delicate touches that we admire in Shakespeare. In fact, the characters of Greek tragedy have more typical than individual traits. They are not types, but they have almost as close a relation to the personified abstractions of *Everyman* as to the complex characters of Ibsen or O'Neill. Each of the characters in the *Antigone* has a certain typical value. Creon is the insolent upstart whose newly won power has gone to his head; he is much less complex than Macbeth or even the "Emperor" Jones. Teiresias is chiefly the angry prophet provoked by Creon's stubbornness to righteous indignation. The Guard is characterized by low and selfish cunning. Hæmon is the ardent young lover, driven to despair by his father's obstinacy and cruelty. Even Antigone herself, who is after Nausicaa and Alcestis the most lovable of ancient heroines, is mainly the martyr to the call of duty. She is a little hard, a little puritanical. She is less complex than George Eliot's Dorothea Brooke, whom she resembles, and less lovable than Scott's Jeanie Deans.

VIII. CONVENTIONS

Like the theaters of other countries and periods, the Greek theater had its own conventions. Owing to the presence of the chorus, the soliloquy and the aside were not so common as on the Elizabethan stage; and the prologue was little used until the time of Euripides. Other conventions require further explanation.

On the Elizabethan stage it was possible to represent an interior scene by drawing aside the curtain which concealed the inner stage. This the Greek dramatist could not do because the spectators who sat at the sides could not see within the scene-building, even when the doors were opened. Hence the Greeks devised the *eccyclema*, a machine for rolling or pushing out upon the stage such a tableau as we have in the *Antigone* showing the body of Eurydice beside the altar where she has killed herself. By a dramatic fiction, such scenes as this were still supposed to be interior scenes.

Natural deaths were sometimes allowed, but convention forbade the representation of violence or bloodshed on the stage. If Clytemnestra is to murder Agamemnon or Medea to slay her children, she must do it off-stage; yet the dramatist may permit the audience to hear the cries of the victims and, by means of the *eccyclema*, he may display the bodies to the spectators. The Greek objection to presenting such scenes upon the stage was not primarily æsthetic, as in the classic drama of France. The chief reason was that piety forbade even the simulation of murder on ground sacred to Dionysus. The statue of the god stood in the orchestra, and his temple was in the immediate vicinity.

Many conventions were attached to the chorus. It was customary for an oncoming actor always to address the chorus before addressing the other actors, no matter what the situation might be. This convention apparently takes us back to the time when there was only one actor, who, of course, had no one

but the chorus whom he might address. We find the same fundamental convention as in opera; namely, that there is a race of men who express their emotions in song and dancing as well as in action and speech. Sometimes the Greek chorus sings and dances when the plot calls for absolute silence. The convention that the chorus must remain upon the stage throughout the play results in many awkward situations. When a murder is being committed just off-stage, the chorus never leaves the stage and makes no attempt even to call the police.

IX. THE UNITIES

In the chapter on the classic drama of France, we shall return to the three so-called unities of time, place, and action which the critics forced upon the unwilling Corneille in the name of Aristotle. As a matter of fact, Aristotle was merely describing the Greek practice and not laying down rules for future dramatists. The unities have a certain basis in the practice of Greek dramatists, but they are due almost entirely to the limitations of the Greek theater.

In Greek plays the scene of the action was seldom changed—not because there was a rule against a change of place, but because it was difficult to imagine a change of scene with the chorus standing by the stage. As a matter of fact, there are changes of scene in two of the finest of Greek tragedies, the *Eumenides* of Æschylus and the *Ajax* of Sophocles. In *The Frogs*, a comedy by Aristophanes, there are no less than five separate scenes. In general, however, the Greek dramatist did not shift the scene of his play. Since the average Greek play is only half as long as a modern play, change of scene was less imperative. Furthermore, the Greek trilogy was practically the equivalent of a long play in three acts. The Agamemnon trilogy of Æschylus is not much longer than *Hamlet*.

The continued presence of the chorus and the absence of a drop-curtain practically forced the Greek playwright to limit the duration of his action to one day. Nevertheless the Greeks occasionally violated the unity of time in a manner that would have shocked Boileau or Racine. In the opening scene of Æschylus's *Agamemnon* a Greek watchman sees in the distance fires signaling the capture of Troy; in the next scene we behold Agamemnon himself just returned from Troy. In ancient times at best the voyage from Troy to Greece must have taken days, perhaps weeks. Æschylus could not have managed this change of scene had he not kept the chorus off the stage during the whole of the first scene.

The difficulty of changing the scene kept the Greek dramatist from attempting such complex story-plays as those of the Elizabethans. Consequently the Greek playwright, like Racine and Ibsen, usually confined his play to the closing episodes of his story. On the contemporary picture-frame stage there has been a remarkable tendency to return to the three unities. Hence in many ways Greek drama is closer to the contemporary practice than is the drama of Shakespeare. The limitations of the Greek stage account in large part for the simplicity, directness, and symmetry of Greek tragedy. The unities made for unity of plot and of mood, and they demanded compression. As to the practical advantages of conforming to the unities, William Archer says: "Though the unities of time and place were long ago exploded as binding principles—indeed, they never had any authority in English drama—yet it is true that a broken-backed action, whether in time or space, ought, so far as possible, to be avoided. An action with a gap of twenty years in it may be all very well in melodrama or romance, but scarcely in higher and more serious types of drama."

X. ÆSCHYLUS

Æschylus (525-456 B.C.), the first of the Greek dramatists whose work has come down to us, was born at Eleusis, where Demeter (Ceres) was worshiped in elaborate ceremonies and processions. He took part in the two wars with Persia and fought at Marathon, Salamis, and Plataea. An epitaph inscribed upon his tomb at Gela refers to his record as a soldier but does not mention his plays: "Beneath this stone lies Æschylus, son of Euphiorion, the Athenian, who perished in the wheat-bearing land of Gela; of his noble prowess the grove of Marathon can speak, and the long-haired Persian who knows it well."

Æschylus made many improvements in the drama. He is said to have devised the long, flowing costume worn by actors and to have introduced certain spectacular effects, such as the use of tombs, statues, and altars upon the stage. His greatest technical contribution was the addition of a second actor. This innovation made it possible for the playwright to bring his two leading characters face to face upon the stage.

Æschylus wrote about ninety plays and won first prize from twelve to fifteen times. We know that he produced his first play in 499 B.C., when he was in his twenty-sixth year, because on that occasion the wooden bleachers of the theater collapsed and were soon afterwards replaced by a structure of stone. Only seven of his plays survive in their entirety, but there are fragments of over seventy others. The earliest of his extant plays, *The Suppliants* (c. 490 B.C.), shows Greek tragedy just emerging from religious ritual and song. Although Æschylus had already introduced a second actor, apparently he had not yet learned to make effective use of him. *The Persians* (472 B.C.), which deals with the wars with Persia, is the only extant example of Greek historical tragedy. *The Seven against Thebes* (467 B.C.) is the concluding play of a trilogy dealing with the misfortunes of the Oedipus family. *Prometheus* or *Prometheus Bound* (c. 460 B.C.) deals with the story which Shelley concluded in his lyrical drama, *Prometheus Unbound*. *Agamemnon*, *The Libation-bearers*, and *The Furies* constitute the only extant Greek trilogy. The *Oresteia*, as it is called, is one of the glories of Greek tragedy. All of Æschylus's plays are characterized by deep religious feeling, dramatic power, and sublime poetry. His characters are lofty figures from an earlier heroic age.

XI. SOPHOCLES

Sophocles (c. 496-c. 406 B. C.) was born at Colonus, a suburb of Athens, about thirty years after Æschylus. As a boy he was chosen, it is said, to lead a chorus of boys in the celebration that followed the great victory of Salamis. His life coincided almost exactly with the period of Athens' greatest glory under the leadership of Pericles. Sophocles took some part in public affairs and served as general in the Samian War (440-439 B.C.). He adopted the improvements made by Æschylus and himself added a third actor. He is said to have given up acting in his own plays because of a weak voice. He wrote over a hundred plays, but only seven survive. Sophocles was the most popular of the Greek writers of tragedy. He triumphed over Æschylus in 468 B.C. while still in his twenties. He won eighteen or twenty victories in all and was never given lower than second place.

The plays of Sophocles do not fall into trilogies but are complete in themselves. Like Æschylus, Sophocles seems to have exhibited every other year. It was customary for the dramatist to present three tragedies and a satyr-

play at one time. The earliest of Sophocles' extant plays, *Antigone* (c. 441 B.C.), is one of his best and at the same time the least difficult for the modern reader. Two of his later plays, *Ædipus the King*, generally regarded as his masterpiece, and *Ædipus at Colonus*, deal with the story of Antigone's ill-starred father. The other extant plays are *Ajax*, *The Trachinæ*, *Electra*, and *Philoctetes*.

Sophocles represents Greek tragedy at its best. His plays possess the qualities for which Greek art is famed: proportion, symmetry, and restraint. His use of the chorus is more dramatic than that of either Æschylus or Euripides. His technique is almost flawless. In *Ædipus the King* he employs much the same method that Ibsen used in *Ghosts* and *Rosmersholm* to reveal past events which are responsible for a rapidly approaching catastrophe. His characters are less heroic and more human than those of Æschylus, but they still preserve a lofty dignity. Although Arnold justly praised Sophocles as a poet who "saw life steadily and saw it whole," one is compelled to admit that as a thinker Sophocles is less original than either of his great rivals.

XII. EURIPIDES

Euripides (c. 480-c. 406 B.C.) was born, it is said, on the day of the famous victory of Salamis. He was about fifteen years younger than Sophocles and approximately forty-five years the junior of Æschylus. Euripides represents a growing tendency to sceptical thinking on all subjects. He is said to have been intimate with Socrates, who was given to questioning the grounds of prevalent Athenian beliefs. It was this aspect of Euripides' plays which was responsible for Aristophanes' frequent satiric attacks upon him. The plays of Euripides are more romantic, more melodramatic, and hence in a sense more modern than those of his predecessors. His treatment of incident and character is often realistic. His Agamemnon is not the lofty figure of Æschylus or Homer but a querulous old man, and his Helen is a cunning and rapacious courtesan. His characters display emotion and violence in a manner that hardly seems Greek. He was severely criticized for his frequent use of the conventional prologue and the *deus ex machina* conclusion. His choruses are beautiful, but too often they perform no dramatic function except to furnish what we should call *entr'acte* music. It was time to abandon the chorus, but no one, of course, dared at that time to take so bold a step.

Euripides won first prize only five times, but his plays were very popular after his death. This posthumous popularity partly explains the fact that eighteen of his plays survive. In modern times it has been the fashion to rate Euripides below his two great predecessors, but in recent years Sir Gilbert Murray has stoutly challenged this estimate. The best perhaps of Euripides' plays are *Medea* (431 B.C.), *Hippolytus* (429 B.C.), *Iphigenia among the Tauri*, *Iphigenia at Aulis*, and *Electra* (c. 410). *The Cyclops* is the only extant example of the Greek satyr-play, but *Alcestis* is a tragi-comedy of somewhat the same type. Milton's *Samson Agonistes* was modeled chiefly upon the plays of Euripides. Racine based two of his plays, *Phèdre* and *Andromaque*, upon Euripides' *Hippolytus* and *Andromache*. Goethe also wrote an *Iphigenia*, and Browning retold the *Alcestis* story in *Balaustion's Adventure*.

XIII. GREEK COMEDY

Although Greek comedy, like Greek tragedy, had its origin in the worship of Dionysus, it had a separate development; and actors and dramatists always

limited themselves to one type. Greek comedy sprang from the mumming of rustics at spring and harvest festivals held in honor of Dionysus. Tragedy, on the other hand, grew out of the Dionysiac dithyramb, which represented the sorrows and trials of the god, but comedy developed from the phallic performances which represented the less serious side of the worship of Dionysus. One of the characteristics of the Dionysiac ceremonies out of which comedy arose was their freedom of speech. These festivals were a time of special license; every one was free to mock at persons and things which at other times he was bound to respect. Athenian comedy came to represent a sort of censorship which vaguely recalls one function of modern journalism. It was not until about 465 B.C., only nine years before the death of Æschylus, that comedy was given public recognition along with tragedy. Aristophanes and his fellows gave something like artistic form to comedy and elevated the character of the whole performance.

The typical Aristophanean comedy consists of several parts loosely strung together: a general explanation of the situation; the *parabasis*, or coming forward, of the chorus, which voiced the author's opinions upon topics of current interest; a loose string of farcical scenes; and, by way of conclusion, a *comus*, or revel, after which the performers retired. The plot was thin and not closely articulated. The chorus often consisted of birds, frogs, wasps, and the like, indicating an element of burlesque. At first the chorus took a larger part in the action than was customary in tragedy, but as time passed the chorus almost disappeared. The play was a curious mixture of dramatic, lyric, and satiric elements.

Aristophanes (c. 448-c. 385 B.C.), the best representative of the Old Comedy, as it was called, was about thirty years younger than Euripides, whose plays he constantly burlesqued. He was a friend of Plato, who gave him a place, along with Socrates, in his *Symposium*. Eleven of Aristophanes' plays are extant: *The Acharnians* (425 B.C.); *The Knights* (424 B.C.), remembered for its attack upon the demagogue Cleon; *The Clouds* (423 B.C.), an attack upon sophists and rhetoricians, including Socrates; *The Wasps* (422 B.C.), which ridicules the Athenian fondness for litigation (adapted by Racine as *Les Plaideurs*); *The Peace* (421 B.C.); *The Birds* (414 B.C.), which Sir Gilbert Murray regards as Aristophanes' masterpiece; *The Lysistrata* (411 B.C.); *The Priestesses of Demeter* (411 B.C.); *The Frogs* (405 B.C.), famous for its comparison of Æschylus with Euripides; *The Women in Parliament* (393 B.C.); and *Plutus* or *Wealth* (388 B.C.).

Aristophanes was by temperament a conservative. He felt that Athens had unwisely departed from its ideals in the great period of Æschylus and the Persian wars. The most surprising element in his comedies is their lyric beauty, which is combined with the broadest and wildest farce. "The comedy of Aristophanes," says Brander Matthews, "was a medley of boisterous comic-opera and of lofty lyric poetry, of vulgar ballet and of patriotic oratory, of indecent farce and of pungent political satire, of acrobatic pantomime and of brilliant literary criticism, of cheap burlesque and of daringly imaginative fantasy."

The Old Comedy represented by Aristophanes was succeeded by a new type known as Middle Comedy (c. 400-c. 320 B.C.), in which there was much parodying and ridiculing of poets. (Greek tragedy produced nothing of importance after the death of Euripides.) The New Comedy (c. 320-c. 250 B.C.) is much nearer the modern conception of comedy than anything found in Aristophanes. The best of the dramatists in this period was Menander (c. 342-c. 291 B.C.), whose plays are best known from Roman adaptations by Plautus and Terence. Athens had lost her independence, and comedy was forced to give up political satire. In some respects this limitation was fortunate, for playwrights

began to mirror private life. In Menander one finds plots that are full of action and better articulated than those of Aristophanes. The dialogue, the incidents, and the characters are all closer to actual life. The chorus has become almost incidental, but the use of the mask continues. The stage setting usually represents a street in Athens. On the left the street leads to the harbor, on the right to the heart of the city. Two or three houses open upon the street, and the action takes place in front of them, as in Plautus's *Menaechmi*. The plays are filled with characters common in ancient Athens: the miserly father, the braggart soldier, the parasite, the courtesan. There are few respectable women because Athenian women lived in seclusion and rarely appeared on the streets.

XIV. THE ROMAN DRAMA

Roman drama is intrinsically much less important than Greek drama, and yet it has an importance far above its real merit because of its influence upon French and English plays. Shakespeare and Molière knew Plautus, Terence, and Seneca better than they knew any of the great Greeks.

Roman literature is derivative and imitative. In this respect it resembles much of our earlier American literature. Longfellow, for example, now seems less important as an original poet than as a transplanter of European culture. The Latin poets, Vergil, Horace, and Catullus, all had their Greek originals and derived inspiration, form, and subject-matter from the Greeks. In fact, Latin literature consists very largely of imitations and adaptations. Only in satire did the Romans make an important original contribution.

The Romans, like the Greeks, had a crude popular drama which sprang from religious festivals, but it never attained any literary importance. Not until the Romans began to imitate the Greeks did Roman drama have any real literary significance. The Romans first came in contact with Greek culture in southern Italy and Sicily, where Greek colonists had settled. It was not, however, until after Rome had begun to recover from the exhausting wars with Carthage that the Romans devoted themselves seriously to literature.

In Rome plays were given regularly three times a year by the city authorities. The theaters were modeled upon those of the Greeks, but one or two important changes were made. The orchestra, no longer needed for the chorus, was reserved for the seats of dignitaries and officials; and the dressing-house was moved forward and lowered so that its roof might be used as a stage. The actors were often slaves, and the audience consisted chiefly of the lower classes. Most of the native Romans were serving in the army, and the city was full of ignorant foreigners many of whom knew barely enough Latin to follow the action of a play. The character of the Roman audience was the chief handicap of the Roman playwright, who could hardly expect this miscellaneous rabble to care for subtle characterization or refined humor. Of the two chief Roman writers of comedy, Plautus succeeded by giving his audience what it wanted while Terence failed to make a popular success because he would not write down to the level of his audience.

Titus Maccius Plautus (c. 254-184 B.C.), who was born at Sarsina in Umbria, is said to have left his native town at an early age to go to Rome, where he found employment as stage-carpenter. At a later period, having lost heavily in some mercantile venture, he was reduced to manual labor. Most of his plays belong to the latter half of his life. Of his twenty extant plays the best perhaps are *The Captives*, *Menaechmi*, *Amphitruo*, modernized by Molière, the *Aulularia*, or *Pot of Gold*, which furnished Molière the model for *L'Avare*, and *Bacchides*.

The type of comedy which Plautus wrote was called *palliata* because the

scene was always laid in Greece and the actors wore the Greek *pallium*. All of Plautus's plays are based upon Greek originals, which he seems to have followed closely, for he includes references to Greek customs which his Roman audience could not possibly understand. In general, however, he shows himself a skilful adapter. In both *Miles Gloriosus* (The Braggart Soldier) and *Pænulus* Plautus amalgamated the plots of two distinct Greek comedies; apparently the Roman audience liked plots with more action than was customary with the Greeks. In the Middle Ages Plautus was little regarded, but the discovery in 1429 A.D. of twelve of his plays aroused a new interest in his work. His plays exerted considerable influence upon the Elizabethans. Shakespeare's early *Comedy of Errors* is based upon Plautus's *Menæchmi*.

Publius Terentius Afer (c. 184-c. 159 B.C.), usually known as Terence, is supposed to have been brought to Rome as a slave from Carthage, where he was born. His master, Terentius Lucanus, whose name he took, gave him an education and freed him. His personal qualities admitted him to the society of a group of aristocratic young men, which included the younger Scipio, who were interested in literature and the improvement of the Latin language. Terence seems to have read his plays to this circle before they were produced. Plautus had been a practical playwright, writing for the audience which came to see his plays. Terence was primarily a man of letters, caring more for the opinion of Scipio than for the verdict of the majority. In view of the failure of his plays upon the stage, one might almost call them closet-dramas. Perhaps their chief value to us is that they preserve so much of the Greek New Comedy, especially of Menander. Terence's six plays are *Andria* (166 B.C.), *Hecyra* (165 B.C.), *Heauton Timoroumenos* (163 B.C.), *Eunuchus* (161 B.C.), *Phormio* (161 B.C.), and *Adelphoe* (160 B.C.). After writing these plays, Terence, it is said, sailed for Greece to study Greek plays and soon afterwards died.

Terence is the first important artist in Roman literature. The Augustans, who regarded Plautus as rude and uncultivated, praised Terence highly for his finished style. His delicate irony and pointed epigrams foreshadow the high comedy of Molière and Congreve. In Terence we find something better than farce or burlesque. The dialogue is handled as a thing of beauty in itself. Terence's characters are Athenian types of the kind found in the plays of Menander: the weeping lover, the unscrupulous parasite, the intriguing slave, the cunning courtesan, the jealous wife, and the damsel in distress.

The history of Roman comedy after the death of Terence is hardly worth recording. His successors had little interest in the drama and cultivated other forms of literature. Horace in his *Art of Poetry* treated the drama at some length, but he and Vergil busied themselves with other forms of poetry when they wrote. In the days of the Emperors there was, with the exception of Seneca's plays, no drama of real importance. The Roman turned for amusement to the chariot race, the gladiatorial combat, and the persecution of Christians.

Lucius Annæus Seneca (c. 3 B.C.-65 A.D.), son of the rhetorician of the same name, is the reputed author of ten so-called tragedies which were destined to exert a considerable influence upon Elizabethan drama: *Hercules Furens*, *Octavia*, *Thyestes*, *Phœnissæ*, *Phædra*, *Œdipus*, *Troades*, *Medea*, *Agamemnon*, *Hercules Œtæus*. Seneca was a statesman and a Stoic philosopher. He was Nero's tutor and confidential adviser to Nero's mother, Agrippina. He was consul in 57 A.D. Nero came to dislike him very much and was largely the cause of Seneca's suicide in 65 A.D. The plays which pass under Seneca's name are imitations of Greek tragedies and were probably never acted, although they may have been intended for reading aloud by elocutionists. As one would expect of a philosopher and rhetorician, the plays are elaborate dialogues or Stoic sermons

couched in highly artificial language. The subjects are the stock themes of Greek tragedy, and Seneca handles them with little originality. The qualities that attracted the Elizabethans to his plays were the elaborate rhetoric and the bloody conclusions.

The theater in Rome had never become quite respectable, for the better classes held themselves aloof from it. The early Christians regarded the theater as immoral. Perhaps they did not carefully distinguish between regular plays and gladiatorial combats; but they had sufficient justification for their attitude, and it is not surprising that after the conversion of Constantine, theatrical performances were abolished. In the Middle Ages, however, the instinct for dramatic spectacle was satisfied in other ways, and eventually the modern drama sprang, like the Greek drama, out of religious ritual—this time out of the service of the Church itself. The next chapter will deal with the rise of this medieval drama in England.

ANTIGONE *

SOPHOCLES

Translated by Sir Richard Claverhouse Jebb

CHARACTERS

ANTIGONE { daughters of *Œdipus*.
ISMENE {
CREON, *King of Thebes*.
EURYDICE, *his wife*.
HAEMON, *his son*.
TEIRESIAS, *the blind prophet*.
GUARD, *set to watch the corpse of Polyneices*.
FIRST MESSENGER.
SECOND MESSENGER, *from the house*.
CHORUS OF THEBAN ELDERS.

SCENE—Before the Royal Palace at Thebes.

ARGUMENT

Polyneices, supported by an Argive army, had marched against Thebes, in order to wrest the sovereignty from his brother Eteocles. The day before that on which the drama opens had been disastrous for the invaders. At six of the city's seven gates, a Theban champion slew his Argive opponent: at the seventh, Eteocles met Polyneices, and each fell by the other's hand. The Argive army fled in the night. Creon, now King of Thebes, has just issued an edict, proclaiming that Eteocles shall be interred with public honours, but that the corpse of Polyneices shall be left unburied.

ANTIGONE. Ismene, sister, mine own dear sister, knowest thou what ill there is, of all bequeathed by *Œdipus*, that Zeus fulfils not for us twain while we live? Nothing painful is there, nothing fraught with ruin, no shame, no dishonour, that I have not seen in thy woes and mine.

And now what new edict is this of which they tell, that our Captain hath

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just published to all Thebes? Knowest thou aught? Hast thou heard? Or is it hidden from thee that our friends are threatened with the doom of our foes?

ISMENE. No word of friends, Antigone, gladsome or painful, hath come to me, since we two sisters were bereft of brothers twain, killed in one day by a twofold blow; and since in this last night the Argive host hath fled, I know no more, whether my fortune be brighter, or more grievous.

AN. I knew it well, and therefore sought to bring thee beyond the gates of the court, that thou mightest hear alone.

Is. What is it? 'Tis plain that thou art brooding on some dark tidings.

AN. What, hath not Creon destined our brothers, the one to honoured burial, the other to unburied shame? Eteocles, they say, with due observance of right and custom, he hath laid in the earth, for his honour among the dead below. But the hapless corpse of Polyneices—as rumour saith, it hath been published to the town that none shall entomb him or mourn, but leave unwept, unsepulchred, a welcome store for the birds, as they espy him, to feast on at will.

Such, 'tis said, is the edict that the good Creon hath set forth for thee and for me,—yes, for me,—and is coming hither to proclaim it clearly to those who know it not; nor counts the matter light, but, whoso disobeys in aught, his doom is death by stoning before all the folk. Thou knowest it now; and thou wilt soon show whether thou art nobly bred, or the base daughter of a noble line.

Is. Poor sister,—and if things stand thus, what could I help to do or undo?

AN. Consider if thou wilt share the toil and the deed.

Is. In what venture? What can be thy meaning?

AN. Wilt thou aid this hand to lift the dead?

Is. Thou wouldst bury him,—when 'tis forbidden to Thebes?

AN. I will do my part,—and thine, if thou wilt not,—to a brother. False to him will I never be found.

Is. Ah, over-bold! when Creon hath forbidden?

AN. Nay, he hath no right to keep me from mine own.

Is. Ah me! think, sister, how our father perished, amid hate and scorn, when sins bared by his own search had moved him to strike both eyes with self-blinding hand; then the mother wife, two names in one, with twisted noose did despite unto her life; and last, our two brothers in one day,—each shedding, hapless one, a kinsman's blood,—wrought out with mutual hands their common doom. And now *we* in turn—we two left all alone—think how we shall perish, more miserably than all the rest, if, in defiance of the law, we brave a king's decree or his powers. Nay, we must remember, first, that we were born women, as who should not strive with men; next, that we are ruled of the stronger, so that we must obey in these things, and in things yet sorer. I, therefore, asking the Spirits Infernal to pardon, seeing that force is put on me herein, will hearken to our rulers; for 'tis witless to be over busy.

AN. I will not urge thee,—no, nor if thou yet shouldst have the mind, wouldst thou be welcome as a worker with *me*. Nay, be what thou wilt; but I will bury him: well for me to die in doing that. I shall rest, a loved one with him whom I have loved, sinless in my crime; for I owe a longer allegiance to the dead than to the living: in that world I shall abide for ever. But if *thou* wilt, be guilty of dishonouring laws which the gods have established in honour.

Is. I do them no dishonour; but to defy the State,—I have no strength for that.

AN. Such be thy plea:—I, then, will go to heap the earth above the brother whom I love.

Is. Alas, unhappy one! How I fear for thee!

AN. Fear not for me: guide thine own fate aright.

Is. At least, then, disclose this plan to none, but hide it closely,—and so, too, will I.

AN. Oh, denounce it! Thou wilt be far more hateful for thy silence, if thou proclaim not these things to all.

Is. Thou hast a hot heart for chilling deeds.

AN. I know that I please where I am most bound to please.

Is. Aye, if thou canst; but thou wouldst what thou canst not.

AN. Why, then, when my strength fails, I shall have done.

Is. A hopeless quest should not be made at all.

AN. If thus thou speakest, thou wilt have hatred from me, and wilt justly be subject to the lasting hatred of the dead. But leave me, and the folly that is mine alone, to suffer this dread thing; for I shall not suffer aught so dreadful as an ignoble death.

Is. Go, then, if thou must; and of this be sure,—that, though thine errand is foolish, to thy dear ones thou art truly dear.

[*Exit ANTIGONE on the spectators' left.*

ISMENE retires into the palace by one of the two side-doors.]

CHORUS.

Beam of the sun, fairest light that ever dawned on Thebè of the seven gates, thou has shone forth at last, eye of golden day, arisen above Dirce's streams! The warrior of the white shield, who came from Argos in his panoply, hath been stirred by thee to headlong flight, in swifter career;

Who set forth against our land by reason of the vexed claims of Polyneices; and, like shrill-screaming eagle,

he flew over into our land, in snow-white pinion sheathed, with an armèd through, and with plumage of helms.

He paused above our dwellings; he ravened around our sevenfold portals with spears athirst for blood; but he went hence, or ever his jaws were glutted with our gore, or the Fire-god's pine-fed flame had seized our crown of towers. So fierce was the noise of battle raised behind him, a thing too hard for him to conquer, as he wrestled with his dragon foe.

For Zeus utterly abhors the boasts of a proud tongue; and when he beheld them coming on in a great stream, in the haughty pride of clanging gold, he smote with brandished fire one who was now hasting to shout victory at his goal upon our ramparts.

Swung down, he fell on the earth with a crash, torch in hand, he who so lately, in the frenzy of the mad onset, was raging against us with the blasts of his tempestuous hate. But those threats fared not as he hoped; and to other foes the mighty War-god dispensed their several dooms, dealing havoc around, a mighty helper at our need.

For seven captains at seven gates, matched against seven, left the tribute of their panoplies to Zeus who turns the battle; save those two of cruel fate, who, born of one sire and one mother, set against each other their twain conquering spears, and are sharers in a common death.

But since Victory of glorious name hath come to us, with joy responsive to the joy of Thebè whose chariots are many, let us enjoy forgetfulness after the late wars, and visit all the temples of the gods with night-long dance and song; and may Bacchus be our leader, whose dancing shakes the land of Thebè.

But lo, the king of the land comes yonder, Creon, son of Menoeceus, our

new ruler by the new fortunes that the gods have given; what counsel is he pondering, that he hath proposed this special conference of elders, summoned by his general mandate?

[Enter CREON, from the central doors of the palace, in the garb of king; with two attendants.]

CR. Sirs, the vessel of our State, after being tossed on wild waves, hath once more been safely steadied by the gods: and ye, out of all the folk, have been called apart by my summons, because I knew, first of all, how true and constant was your reverence for the royal power of Laius; how, again, when Oedipus was ruler of our land, and when he had perished, your steadfast loyalty still upheld their children. Since, then, his sons have fallen in one day by a twofold doom,—each smitten by the other, each stained with a brother's blood,—I now possess the throne and all its powers, by nearness of kinship to the dead.

No man can be fully known, in soul and spirit and mind, until he hath been seen versed in rule and lawgiving. For if any, being supreme guide of the State, cleaves not to the best counsels, but, through some fear, keeps his lips locked, I hold, and have ever held, him most base; and if any makes a friend of more account than his fatherland, that man hath no place in my regard. For I—be Zeus my witness, who sees all things always—would not be silent if I saw ruin, instead of safety, coming to the citizens; nor would I ever deem the country's foe a friend to myself; remembering this, that our country is the ship that bears us safe, and that only while she prospers in our voyage can we make true friends.

Such are the rules by which I guard this city's greatness. And in accord with them is the edict which I have now published to the folk touching the sons of Oedipus;—that Eteocles, who hath fallen fighting for our city, in all renown of arms, shall be entombed, and crowned with every rite that follows the noblest dead to their rest. But for

his brother, Polyneices,—who came back from exile, and sought to consume utterly with fire the city of his fathers and the shrines of his fathers' gods,—sought to taste of kindred blood, and to lead the remnant into slavery;—touching this man, it hath been proclaimed to our people that none shall grace him with sepulture or lament, but leave him unburied, a corpse for birds and dogs to eat, a ghastly sight of shame.

Such the spirit of my dealing; and never, by deed of mine, shall the wicked stand in honour before the just; but whoso hath good will to Thebes, he shall be honoured of me, in his life and in his death.

CH. Such is thy pleasure, Creon, son of Menoeceus, touching the city's foe, and its friend; and thou hast power, I ween, to take what order thou wilt, both for the dead, and for all us who live.

CR. See, then, that ye be guardians of the mandate.

CH. Lay the burden of this task on some younger man.

CR. Nay, watchers of the corpse have been found.

CH. What, then, is this further charge that thou wouldst give?

CR. That ye side not with the breakers of these commands.

CH. No man is so foolish that he is enamoured of death.

CR. In sooth, that is the meed; yet lucre hath oft ruined men through their hopes.

[Enter GUARD.]

GU. My liege, I will not say that I come breathless from speed, or that I have plied a nimble foot; for often did my thoughts make me pause, and wheel round in my path, to return. My mind was holding large discourse with me; 'Fool, why goest thou to thy certain doom?' 'Wretch, tarrying again? And if Creon hears this from another, must not thou smart for it?' So debating, I went on my way with lagging steps, and thus a short road was made long. At last, however, it carried the day

that I should come hither—to thee; and, though my tale be nought, yet will I tell it; for I come with a good grip on one hope,—that I can suffer nothing but what is my fate.

CR. And what is it that disquiets thee thus?

GU. I wish to tell thee first about myself—I did not do the deed—I did not see the doer—it were not right that I should come to any harm.

CR. Thou hast a shrewd eye for thy mark; well dost thou fence thyself round against the blame:—clearly thou hast some strange thing to tell.

GU. Aye, truly; dread news makes one pause long.

CR. Then tell it, wilt thou, and so get thee gone?

GU. Well, this is it.—The corpse—some one hath just given it burial, and gone away,—after sprinkling thirsty dust on the flesh, with such other rites as piety enjoins.

CR. What sayest thou? What living man hath dared this deed?

GU. I know not; no stroke of pickaxe was seen there, no earth thrown up by mattock; the ground was hard and dry, unbroken, without track of wheels; the doer was one who had left no trace. And when the first day-watchman showed it to us, sore wonder fell on all. The dead man was veiled from us; not shut within a tomb, but lightly strewn with dust, as by the hand of one who shunned a curse. And no sign met the eye as though any beast of prey or any dog had come nigh to him, or torn him.

Then evil words flew fast and loud among us, guard accusing guard; and it would e'en have come to blows at last, nor was there any to hinder. Every man was the culprit, and no one was convicted, but all disclaimed knowledge of the deed. And we were ready to take red-hot iron in our hands;—to walk through fire;—to make oath by the gods that we had not done the deed,—that we were not privy to the planning or the doing.

At last, when all our searching was fruitless, one spake, who made us all

bend our faces on the earth in fear; for we saw not how we could gainsay him, or escape mischance if we obeyed. His counsel was that this deed must be reported to thee, and not hidden. And this seemed best; and the lot doomed my hapless self to win this prize. So here I stand,—as unwilling as unwilling, well I wot; for no man delights in the bearer of bad news.

CH. O king, my thoughts have long been whispering, can this deed, perchance, be e'en the work of gods?

CR. Cease, ere thy words fill me utterly with wrath, lest thou be found at once an old man and foolish. For thou sayest what is not to be borne, in saying that the gods have care for this corpse. Was it for high reward of trusty service that they sought to hide his nakedness, who came to burn their pillared shrines and sacred treasures, to burn their land, and scatter its laws to the winds? Or dost thou behold the gods honouring the wicked? It cannot be. No! From the first there were certain in the town that muttered against me, chafing at this edict, wagging their heads in secret; and kept not their necks duly under the yoke, like men contented with my sway.

'Tis by them, well I know, that these have been beguiled and bribed to do this deed. Nothing so evil as money ever grew to be current among men. This lays cities low, this drives men from their homes, this trains and warps honest souls till they set themselves to works of shame; this still teaches folk to practise villanies, and to know every godless deed.

But all the men who wrought this thing for hire have made it sure that, soon or late, they shall pay the price. Now, as Zeus still hath my reverence, know this—I tell it thee on my oath:—If ye find not the very author of this burial, and produce him before mine eyes, death alone shall not be enough for you, till first, hung up alive, ye have revealed this outrage,—that henceforth ye may thief with better knowledge whence lucre should be won, and learn

that it is not well to love gain from every source. For thou wilt find that ill-gotten pelf brings more men to ruin than to weal.

GU. May I speak? Or shall I just turn and go?

CR. Knowest thou not that even now thy voice offends?

GU. Is thy smart in the ears, or in the soul?

CR. And why wouldst thou define the seat of my pain?

GU. The doer vexes thy mind, but I, thine ears.

CR. Ah, thou art a born babbler, 'tis well seen.

GU. May be, but never the doer of this deed.

CR. Yea, and more,—the seller of thy life for silver.

GU. Alas! 'Tis sad, truly, that he who judges should misjudge.

CR. Let thy fancy play with 'judgment' as it will;—but, if ye show me not the doers of these things, ye shall avow that dastardly gains work sorrows. *[Exit.]*

GU. Well, may he be found! so 'twere best. But, be he caught or be he not—fortune must settle that—truly thou wilt not see me here again. Saved, even now, beyond hope and thought, I owe the gods great thanks. *[Exit.]*

CHORUS.

Wonders are many, and none is more wonderful than man; the power that crosses the white sea, driven by the stormy south-wind, making a path under surges that threaten to engulf him; and Earth, the eldest of the gods, the immortal, the unwearied, doth he wear, turning the soil with the offspring of horses, as the ploughs go to and fro from year to year.

And the light-hearted race of birds, and the tribes of savage beasts, and the sea-brood of the deep, he snares in the meshes of his woven toils, he leads captive, man excellent in wit. And he masters by his arts the beast whose lair is in the wilds, who roams the hills; he tames the horse of shaggy mane, he

puts the yoke upon its neck, he tames the tireless mountain bull.

And speech, and wind-swift thought, and all the moods that mould a state, hath he taught himself; and how to flee the arrows of the frost, when 'tis hard lodging under the clear sky, and the arrows of the rushing rain; yea, he hath resource for all; without resource he meets nothing that must come: only against Death shall he call for aid in vain; but from baffling maladies he hath devised escapes.

Cunning beyond fancy's dream is the fertile skill which brings him, now to evil, now to good. When he honours the laws of the land, and that justice which he hath sworn by the gods to uphold, proudly stands his city: no city hath he who, for his rashness, dwells with sin. Never may he share my hearth, never think my thoughts, who doth these things!

[*Enter the GUARD on the spectators' left, leading in ANTIGONE.*]

What portent from the gods is this?—my soul is amazed. I know her—how can I deny that yon maiden is Antigone?

O hapless, and child of hapless sire,—of Oedipus! What means this? Thou brought a prisoner?—thou, disloyal to the king's laws, and taken in folly?

GU. Here she is, the doer of the deed:—we caught this girl burying him:—but where is Creon?

CH. Lo, he comes forth again from the house, at our need.

CR. What is it? What hath chanced, that makes my coming timely?

GU. O king, against nothing should men pledge their word; for the after-thought belies the first intent. I could have vowed that I should not soon be here again,—scared by thy threats, with which I had just been lashed: but, —since the joy that surprises and transcends our hopes is like in fulness to no other pleasure,—I have come, though 'tis in breach of my sworn oath, bringing this maid; who was taken

showing grace to the dead. This time there was no casting of lots; no, this luck hath fallen to me, and to none else. And now, sire, take her thyself, question her, examine her, as thou wilt; but I have a right to free and final quittance of this trouble.

CR. And thy prisoner here—how and whence hast thou taken her?

GU. She was burying the man; thou knowest all.

CR. Dost thou mean what thou sayest? Dost thou speak aright?

GU. I saw her burying the corpse that thou hadst forbidden to bury. Is that plain and clear?

CR. And how was she seen? how taken in the act?

GU. It befell on this wise. When we had come to the place,—with those dread menaces of thine upon us,—we swept away all the dust that covered the corpse, and bared the dank body well; and then sat us down on the brow of the hill, to windward, heedful that the smell from him should not strike us; every man was wide awake, and kept his neighbour alert with torrents of threats, if any one should be careless of this task.

So went it, until the sun's bright orb stood in mid heaven, and the heat began to burn: and then suddenly a whirlwind lifted from the earth a storm of dust, a trouble in the sky, and filled the plain, marring all the leafage of its woods; and the wide air was choked therewith: we closed our eyes, and bore the plague from the gods.

And when, after a long while, this storm had passed, the maid was seen; and she cried aloud with the sharp cry of a bird in its bitterness,—even as when, within the empty nest, it sees the bed stripped of its nestlings. So she also, when she saw the corpse bare, lifted up a voice of wailing, and called down curses on the doers of that deed. And straightway she brought thirsty dust in her hands; and from a shapely ewer of bronze, held high, with thrice-poured drink-offering she crowned the dead.

We rushed forward when we saw it,

and at once closed upon our quarry, who was in no wise dismayed. Then we taxed her with her past and present doings; and she stood not on denial of aught,—at once to my joy and to my pain. To have escaped from ill's one's self is a great joy; but 'tis painful to bring friends to ill. Howbeit, all such things are of less account to me than mine own safety.

CR. Thou—thou whose face is bent to earth—dost thou avow, or disavow, this deed?

AN. I avow it; I make no denial.

CR. [to GUARD.] Thou canst betake thee whither thou wilt, free and clear of a grave charge. [Exit GUARD.]

[To ANTIGONE.] Now, tell me thou—not in many words, but briefly—knewest thou that an edict had forbidden this?

AN. I knew it: could I help it? It was public.

CR. And thou didst indeed dare to transgress that law?

AN. Yes; for it was not Zeus that had published me that edict; not such are the laws set among men by the Justice who dwells with the gods below; nor deemed I that thy decrees were of such force, that a mortal could override the unwritten and unfailing statutes of heaven. For their life is not of to-day or yesterday, but from all time, and no man knows when they were first put forth.

Not through dread of any human pride could I answer to the gods for breaking *these*. Die I must,—I knew that well (how should I not?)—even without thy edicts. But if I am to die before my time, I count that a gain: for when any one lives, as I do, compassed about with evils, can such an one find aught but gain in death?

So for me to meet this doom is trifling grief; but if I had suffered my mother's son to lie in death an unburied corpse, that would have grieved me; for this, I am not grieved. And if my present deeds are foolish in thy sight, it may be that a foolish judge arraigns my folly.

CH. The maid shows herself pas-

sionate child of passionate sire, and knows not how to bend before troubles.

CR. Yet I would have thee know that o'er-stubborn spirits are most often humbled; 'tis the stiffest iron, baked to hardness in the fire, that thou shalt oftenest see snapped and shivered; and I have known horses that show temper brought to order by a little curb; there is no room for pride, when thou art thy neighbour's slave.—This girl was already versed in insolence when she transgressed the laws that had been set forth; and, that done, lo, a second insult,—to vaunt of this, and exult in her deed.

Now verily I am no man, she is the man, if this victory shall rest with her, and bring no penalty. No! be she sister's child, or nearer to me in blood than any that worships Zeus at the altar of our house,—she and her kinsfolk shall not avoid a doom most dire; for indeed I charge that other with a like share in the plotting of this burial.

And summon her—for I saw her e'en now within,—raving, and not mistress of her wits. So oft, before the deed, the mind stands self-convicted in its treason, when folks are plotting mischief in the dark. But verily this, too, is hateful,—when one who hath been caught in wickedness then seeks to make the crime a glory.

AN. Wouldst thou do more than take and slay me?

CR. No more, indeed; having that, I have all.

AN. Why then dost thou delay? In thy discourse there is nought that pleases me,—never may there be!—and so my words must needs be unpleasing to thee. And yet, for glory—whence could I have won a nobler, than by giving burial to mine own brother? All here would own that they thought it well, were not their lips sealed by fear. But royalty, blest in so much besides, hath the power to do and say what it will.

CR. Thou differest from all these Thebans in that view.

AN. These also share it; but they curb their tongues for thee.

CR. And art thou not ashamed to act apart from them?

AN. No; there is nothing shameful in piety to a brother.

CR. Was it not a brother, too, that died in the opposite cause?

AN. Brother by the same mother and the same sire.

CR. Why, then, dost thou render a grace that is impious in his sight?

AN. The dead man will not say that he so deems it.

CR. Yea, if thou makest him but equal in honour with the wicked.

AN. It was his brother, not his slave, that perished.

CR. Wasting this land; while *he* fell as its champion.

AN. Nevertheless, Hades desires these rites.

CR. But the good desires not a like portion with the evil.

AN. Who knows but this seems blameless in the world below?

CR. A foe is never a friend—not even in death.

AN. 'Tis not my nature to join in hating, but in loving.

CR. Pass, then, to the world of the dead, and, if thou must needs love, love them. While I live, no woman shall rule me.

[Enter ISMENE from the house, led in by two attendants.]

CH. Lo, yonder Ismene comes forth, shedding such tears as fond sisters weep; a cloud upon her brow casts its shadow over her darkly-flushing face, and breaks in rain on her fair cheek.

CR. And thou, who, lurking like a viper in my house, wast secretly draining my life-blood, while I knew not that I was nurturing two pests, to rise against my throne—come, tell me now, wilt thou also confess thy part in this burial, or wilt thou forswear all knowledge of it?

IS. I have done the deed,—if she allows my claim,—and share the burden of the charge.

AN. Nay, justice will not suffer thee to do that: thou didst not consent

to the deed, nor did I give thee part in it.

IS. But, now that ills beset thee, I am not ashamed to sail the sea of trouble at thy side.

AN. Whose was the deed, Hades and the dead are witnesses: a friend in words is not the friend that I love.

IS. Nay, sister, reject me not, but let me die with thee, and duly honour the dead.

AN. Share not thou my death, nor claim deeds to which thou hast not put thy hand: my death will suffice.

IS. And what life is dear to me, bereft of thee?

AN. Ask Creon; all thy care is for him.

IS. Why vex me thus, when it avails thee nought?

AN. Indeed, if I mock, 'tis with pain that I mock thee.

IS. Tell me,—how can I serve thee, even now?

AN. Save thyself: I grudge not thy escape.

IS. Ah, woe is me! And shall I have no share in thy fate?

AN. Thy choice was to live; mine, to die.

IS. At least thy choice was not made without my protest.

AN. One world approved thy wisdom; another, mine.

IS. Howbeit, the offence is the same for both of us.

AN. Be of good cheer; thou livest; but my life hath long been given to death, that so I might serve the dead.

CR. Lo, one of these maidens hath newly shown herself foolish, as the other hath been since her life began.

IS. Yea, O king, such reason as nature may have given abides not with the unfortunate, but goes astray.

CR. Thine did, when thou chosest vile deeds with the vile.

IS. What life could I endure, without her presence?

CR. Nay, speak not of her 'presence'; she lives no more.

IS. But wilt thou slay the betrothed of thine own son?

CR. Nay, there are other fields for him to plough.

IS. But there can never be such love as bound him to her.

CR. I like not an evil wife for my son.

AN. Haemon, beloved! How thy father wrongs thee!

CR. Enough, enough of thee and of thy marriage!

CH. Wilt thou indeed rob thy son of this maiden?

CR. 'Tis Death that shall stay these bridals for me.

CH. 'Tis determined, it seems, that she shall die.

CR. Determined, yes, for thee and for me.—[*to the two attendants.*] No more delay—servants, take them within! Henceforth they must be women, and not range at large; for verily even the bold seek to fly, when they see Death now closing on their life.

[*Exeunt attendants, guarding ANTIGONE and ISMENE.—CREON remains.*]

CHORUS.

Blest are they whose days have not tasted of evil. For when a house hath once been shaken from heaven, there the curse fails nevermore, passing from life to life of the race; even as, when the surge is driven over the darkness of the deep by the fierce breath of Thracian sea-winds, it rolls up the black sand from the depths, and there is a sullen roar from wind-vexed headlands that front the blows of the storm.

I see that from olden time the sorrows in the house of the Labdacidae are heaped upon the sorrows of the dead; and generation is not freed by generation, but some god strikes them down, and the race hath no deliverance.

For now that hope of which the light had been spread above the last root of the house of Œdipus—that hope, in turn, is brought low—by the blood-stained dust due to the gods infernal, and by folly in speech, and frenzy at the heart.

Thy power, O Zeus, what human trespass can limit? That power which neither Sleep, the all-ensnaring, nor the untiring months of the gods can master; but thou, a ruler to whom time brings not old age, dwellest in the dazzling splendour of Olympus.

And through the future, near and far, as through the past, shall this law hold good: Nothing that is vast enters into the life of mortals without a curse.

For that hope whose wanderings are so wide is to many men a comfort, but to many a false lure of giddy desires; and the disappointment comes on one who knoweth nought till he burn his foot against the hot fire.

For with wisdom hath some one given forth the famous saying, that evil seems good, soon or late, to him whose mind the god draws to mischief; and but for the briefest space doth he fare free of woe.

But lo, Haemon, the last of thy sons;—comes he grieving for the doom of his promised bride, Antigone, and bitter for the baffled hope of his marriage?

[*Enter HAEMON.*]

CR. We shall know soon, better than seers could tell us.—My son, hearing the fixed doom of thy betrothed, art thou come in rage against thy father? Or have I thy good will, act how I may?

HÆ. Father, I am thine; and thou, in thy wisdom, tracest for me rules which I shall follow. No marriage shall be deemed by me a greater gain than thy good guidance.

CR. Yea, this, my son, should be thy heart's fixed law,—in all things to obey thy father's will. 'Tis for this that men pray to see dutiful children grow up around them in their homes,—that such may requite their father's foe with evil, and honour, as their father doth, his friend. But he who begets unprofitable children—what shall we say that he hath sown, but troubles for himself, and much triumph for his foes? Then do not thou, my

son, at pleasure's beck, dethrone thy reason for a woman's sake; knowing that this is a joy that soon grows cold in clasping arms,—an evil woman to share thy bed and thy home. For what wound could strike deeper than a false friend? Nay, with loathing, and as if she were thine enemy, let this girl go to find a husband in the house of Hades. For since I have taken her, alone of all the city, in open disobedience, I will not make myself a liar to my people—I will slay her.

So let her appeal as she will to the majesty of kindred blood. If I am to nurture mine own kindred in naughtiness, needs must I bear with it in aliens. He who does his duty in his own household will be found righteous in the State also. But if any one transgresses, and does violence to the laws, or thinks to dictate to his rulers, such an one can win no praise from me. No, whomsoever the city may appoint, that man must be obeyed, in little things and great, in just things and unjust; and I should feel sure that one who thus obeys would be a good ruler no less than a good subject, and in the storm of spears would stand his ground where he was set, loyal and dauntless at his comrade's side.

But disobedience is the worst of evils. This it is that ruins cities; this makes homes desolate; by this, the ranks of allies are broken into headlong rout; but, of the lives whose course is fair, the greater part owes safety to obedience. Therefore we must support the cause of order, and in no wise suffer a woman to worst us. Better to fall from power, if we must, by a man's hand; then we should not be called weaker than a woman.

CH. To us, unless our years have stolen our wit, thou seemest to say wisely what thou sayest.

HÆ. Father, the gods implant reason in men, the highest of all things that we call our own. Not mine the skill—far from me be the quest!—to say wherein thou speakest not aright; and yet another man, too, might have some useful thought. At least, it is

my natural office to watch, on thy behalf, all that men say, or do, or find to blame. For the dread of thy frown forbids the citizen to speak such words as would offend thine ear; but I can hear these murmurs in the dark, these moanings of the city for this maiden; 'no woman,' they say, 'ever merited her doom less,—none ever was to die so shamefully for deeds so glorious as hers; who, when her own brother had fallen in bloody strife, would not leave him unburied, to be devoured by carrion dogs, or by any bird:—deserves not *she* the meed of golden honour?'

Such is the darkling rumour that spreads in secret. For me, my father, no treasure is so precious as thy welfare. What, indeed, is a nobler ornament for children than a prospering sire's fair fame, or for sire than son's? Wear not, then, one mood only in thyself; think not that thy word, and thine alone, must be right. For if any man thinks that he alone is wise,—that in speech, or in mind, he hath no peer,—such a soul, when laid open, is ever found empty.

No, though a man be wise, 'tis no shame for him to learn many things, and to bend in season. Seest thou, beside the wintry torrent's course, how the trees that yield to it save every twig, while the stiff-necked perish root and branch? And even thus he who keeps the sheet of his sail taut, and never slackens it, upsets his boat, and finishes his voyage with keel uppermost.

Nay, forego thy wrath; permit thyself to change. For if I, a younger man, may offer my thought, it were far best, I ween, that men should be all-wise by nature; but, otherwise—and oft the scale inclines not so—'tis good also to learn from those who speak aright.

CH. Sire, 'tis meet that thou shouldest profit by his words, if he speaks aught in season, and thou, Haemon, by thy father's; for on both parts there hath been wise speech.

CR. Men of my age—are we indeed to be schooled, then, by men of his?

HÆ. In nothing that is not right; but if I am young, thou shouldest look to my merits, not to my years.

CR. Is it a merit to honour the unruly?

HÆ. I could wish no one to show respect for evil-doers.

CR. Then is not she tainted with that malady?

HÆ. Our Theban folk, with one voice, denies it.

CR. Shall Thebes prescribe to me how I must rule?

HÆ. See, there thou hast spoken like a youth indeed.

CR. Am I to rule this land by other judgment than mine own?

HÆ. That is no city, which belongs to one man.

CR. Is not the city held to be the ruler's?

HÆ. Thou wouldst make a good monarch of a desert.

CR. This boy, it seems, is the woman's champion.

HÆ. If thou art a woman; indeed, my care is for thee.

CR. Shameless, at open feud with thy father!

HÆ. Nay, I see thee offending against justice.

CR. Do I offend, when I respect mine own prerogatives?

HÆ. Thou dost not respect them, when thou tramplest on the gods' honours.

CR. O dastard nature, yielding place to woman!

HÆ. Thou wilt never find me yield to baseness.

CR. All thy words, at least, plead for that girl.

HÆ. And for thee, and for me, and for the gods below.

CR. Thou canst never marry her, on this side the grave.

HÆ. Then she must die, and in death destroy another.

CR. How! doth thy boldness run to open threats?

HÆ. What threat is it, to combat vain resolves?

CR. Thou shalt rue thy witless teaching of wisdom.

HÆ. Wert thou not my father, I would have called thee unwise.

CR. Thou woman's slave, use not wheedling speech with me.

HÆ. Thou wouldest speak, and then hear no reply?

CR. Sayest thou so? Now, by the heaven above us—be sure of it—thou shalt smart for taunting me in this opprobrious strain. Bring forth that hated thing, that she may die forthwith in his presence—before his eyes—at her bridegroom's side!

HÆ. No, not at my side—never think it—shall she perish; nor shalt thou ever set eyes more upon my face:—rave, then, with such friends as can endure thee. [Exit HÆMON.]

CH. The man is gone, O king, in angry haste; a youthful mind, when stung, is fierce.

CR. Let him do, or dream, more than man—good speed to him!—But he shall not save these two girls from their doom.

CH. Dost thou indeed purpose to slay both?

CR. Not her whose hands are pure: thou sayest well.

CH. And by what doom mean'st thou to slay the other.

CR. I will take her where the path is loneliest, and hide her, living, in a rocky vault, with so much food set forth as piety prescribes, that the city may avoid a public stain. And there, praying to Hades, the only god whom she worships, perchance she will obtain release from death; or else will learn, at last, though late, that it is lost labour to revere the dead. [Exit CREON.]

CHORUS.

Love, unconquered in the fight, Love, who makest havoc of wealth, who keepest thy vigil on the soft cheek of a maiden; thou roamest over the sea, and among the homes of dwellers in the wilds; no immortal can escape thee, nor any among men whose life is for a day; and he to whom thou hast come is mad.

The just themselves have their minds warped by thee to wrong, for their

ruin: 'tis thou that hast stirred up this present strife of kinsmen; victorious is the love-kindling light from the eyes of the fair bride; it is a power enthroned in sway beside the eternal laws; for there the goddess Aphrodite is working her unconquerable will.

But now I also am carried beyond the bounds of loyalty, and can no more keep back the streaming tears, when I see Antigone thus passing to the bridal chamber where all are laid to rest.

ANTIGONE.

See me, citizens of my fatherland, setting forth on my last way, looking my last on the sunlight that is for me no more; no, Hades who gives sleep to all leads me living to Acheron's shore; who have had no portion in the chant that brings the bride, nor hath any song been mine for the crowning of bridals; whom the lord of the Dark Lake shall wed.

CHORUS.

Glorious, therefore, and with praise, thou departest to that deep place of the dead: wasting sickness hath not smitten thee; thou hast not found the wages of the sword; no, mistress of thine own fate, and still alive, thou shalt pass to Hades, as no other of mortal kind hath passed.

ANTIGONE.

I have heard in other days how dread a doom befell our Phrygian guest, the daughter of Tantalus, on the Siplyian heights; how, like clinging ivy, the growth of stone subdued her; and the rains fail not, as men tell, from her wasting form, nor fails the snow, while beneath her weeping lids the tears bedew her bosom; and most like to hers is the fate that brings me to my rest.

CHORUS.

Yet she was a goddess, thou knowest, and born of gods; we are mortals, and of mortal race. But 'tis great renown for a woman who hath perished

that she should have shared the doom of the godlike, in her life, and afterward in death.

ANTIGONE.

Ah, I am mocked! In the name of our fathers' gods, can ye not wait till I am gone,—must ye taunt me to my face, O my city, and ye, her wealthy sons? Ah, fount of Dirce, and thou holy ground of Thebè whose chariots are many; ye, at least, will bear me witness, in what sort, unwept of friends, and by what laws I pass to the rock-closed prison of my strange tomb, ah me unhappy! who have no home on the earth or in the shades, no home with the living or with the dead.

CHORUS.

Thou hast rushed forward to the utmost verge of daring; and against that throne where Justice sits on high thou hast fallen, my daughter, with a grievous fall. But in this ordeal thou art paying, haply, for thy father's sin.

ANTIGONE.

Thou hast touched on my bitterest thought,—awaking the ever-new lament for my sire and for all the doom given to us, the famed house of Labdacus. Alas for the horrors of the mother's bed! alas for the wretched mother's slumber at the side of her own son,—and my sire! From what manner of parents did I take my miserable being! And to them I go thus, accursed, unwed, to share their home. Alas, my brother, ill-starred in thy marriage, in thy death thou hast undone my life!

CHORUS.

Reverent action claims a certain praise for reverence; but an offence against power cannot be brooked by him who hath power in his keeping. Thy self-willed temper hath wrought thy ruin.

ANTIGONE.

Unwept, unfriended, without marriage-song, I am led forth in my sorrow on this journey that can be de-

laid no more. No longer, hapless one, may I behold yon day-star's sacred eye; but for my fate no tear is shed, no friend makes moan.

CR. Know ye not that songs and wailings before death would never cease, if it profited to utter them? Away with her—away! And when ye have enclosed her, according to my word, in her vaulted grave, leave her alone, forlorn—whether she wishes to die, or to live a buried life in such a home. Our hands are clean as touching this maiden. But this is certain—she shall be deprived of her sojourn in the light.

AN. Tomb, bridal-chamber, eternal prison in the caverned rock, whither I go to find mine own, those many who have perished, and whom Persephone hath received among the dead! Last of all shall I pass thither, and far most miserably of all, before the term of my life is spent. But I cherish good hope that my coming will be welcome to my father, and pleasant to thee, my mother, and welcome, brother, to thee; for, when ye died, with mine own hands I washed and dressed you, and poured drink-offerings at your graves; and now, Polyneices, 'tis for tending thy corpse that I win such recompense as this.

[And yet I honoured thee, as the wise will deem, rightly. Never, had I been a mother of children, or if a husband had been mouldering in death, would I have taken this task upon me in the city's despite. What law, ye ask, is my warrant for that word? The husband lost, another might have been found, and child from another, to replace the first-born; but, father and mother hidden with Hades, no brother's life could ever bloom for me again. Such was the law whereby I held thee first in honour; but Creon deemed me guilty of error therein, and of outrage, ah brother mine! And now he leads me thus, a captive in his hands; no bridal bed, no bridal song hath been mine, no joy of marriage, no portion in the nurture of children; but thus, forlorn of

friends, unhappy one, I go living to the vaults of death.]

And what law of heaven have I transgressed? Why, hapless one, should I look to the gods any more,—what ally should I invoke,—when by piety I have earned the name of impious? Nay, then, if these things are pleasing to the gods, when I have suffered my doom, I shall come to know my sin; but if the sin is with my judges, I could wish them no fuller measure of evil than they, on their part, mete wrongfully to me.

CH. Still the same tempest of the soul vexes this maiden with the same fierce gusts.

CR. Then for this shall her guards have cause to rue their slowness.

AN. Ah me! that word hath come very near to death.

CR. I can cheer thee with no hope that this doom is not thus to be fulfilled.

AN. O city of my fathers in the land of Thebè! O ye gods, eldest of our race!—they lead me hence—now, now—they tarry not! Behold me, princes of Thebes, the last daughter of the house of your kings,—see what I suffer, and from whom, because I feared to cast away the fear of Heaven! [ANTIGONE is led away by the guards.]

CHORUS.

Even thus endured Danaë in her beauty to change the light of day for brass-bound walls; and in that chamber, secret as the grave, she was held close prisoner; yet was she of a proud lineage, O my daughter, and charged with the keeping of the seed of Zeus, that fell in the golden rain.

But dreadful is the mysterious power of fate; there is no deliverance from it by wealth or by war, by fenced city, or dark, sea-beaten ships.

And bonds tamed the son of Dryas, swift to wrath, that king of the Edonians; so paid he for his frenzied taunts, when, by the will of Dionysus, he was pent in a rocky prison. There the

fierce exuberance of his madness slowly passed away. That man learned to know the god, whom in his frenzy he had provoked with mockeries; for he had sought to quell the god-posessed women, and the Bacchanalian fire; and he angered the Muses that love the flute.

And by the waters of the Dark Rocks, the waters of the twofold sea, are the shores of Bosphorus, and Thracian Salmydessus; where Ares, neighbour to the city, saw the accurst, blinding wound dealt to the two sons of Phineus by his fierce wife,—the wound that brought darkness to those vengeance-craving orbs, smitten with her bloody hands, smitten with her shuttle for a dagger.

Pining in their misery, they bewailed their cruel doom, those sons of a mother hapless in her marriage; but she traced her descent from the ancient line of the Erechtheidae; and in far-distant caves she was nursed amid her father's storms, that child of Boreas, swift as a steed over the steep hills, a daughter of gods; yet upon her also the gray Fates bore hard, my daughter.

[Enter TEIRESIAS, led by a Boy, on the spectators' right.]

TE. Princes of Thebes, we have come with linked steps, both served by the eyes of one; for thus, by a guide's help, the blind must walk.

CR. And what, aged Teiresias, are thy tidings?

TE. I will tell thee; and do thou hearken to the seer.

CR. Indeed, it has not been my wont to slight thy counsel.

TE. Therefore didst thou steer our city's course aright.

CR. I have felt, and can attest, thy benefits.

TE. Mark that now, once more, thou standest on fate's fine edge.

CR. What means this? How I shudder at thy message!

TE. Thou wilt learn, when thou hearest the warnings of mine art. As

I took my place on mine old seat of augury, where all birds have been wont to gather within my ken, I heard a strange voice among them; they were screaming with dire, feverish rage, that drowned their language in a jargon; and I knew that they were rending each other with their talons, murderously; the whirr of wings told no doubtful tale.

Forthwith, in fear, I essayed burnt-sacrifice on a duly kindled altar: but from my offerings the Fire-god showed no flame; a dank moisture, oozing from the thigh-flesh, trickled forth upon the embers, and smoked, and sputtered; the gall was scattered to the air; and the streaming thighs lay bared of the fat that had been wrapped round them.

Such was the failure of the rites by which I vainly asked a sign, as from this boy I learned; for he is my guide, as I am guide to others. And 'tis thy counsel that hath brought this sickness on our State. For the altars of our city and of our hearths have been tainted, one and all, by birds and dogs, with carrion from the hapless corpse, the son of Oedipus: and therefore the gods no more accept prayer and sacrifice at our hands, or the flame of meat-offering; nor doth any bird give a clear sign by its shrill cry, for they have tasted the fatness of a slain man's blood.

Think, then, on these things, my son. All men are liable to err; but when an error hath been made, that man is no longer witless or unblest who heals the ill into which he hath fallen, and remains not stubborn.

Self-will, we know, incurs the charge of folly. Nay, allow the claim of the dead; stab not the fallen; what prowess is it to slay the slain anew? I have sought thy good, and for thy good I speak: and never is it sweeter to learn from a good counsellor than when he counsels for thine own gain.

CR. Old man, ye all shoot your shafts at me, as archers at the butts;—ye must needs practise on me with seer-craft also;—aye, the seer-tribe hath long trafficked in me, and made

me their merchandise. Gain your gains, drive your trade, if ye list, in the silver-gold of Sardis and the gold of India; but ye shall not hide that man in the grave,—no, though the eagles of Zeus should bear the carrion morsels to their Master's throne—no, not for dread of that defilement will I suffer his burial:—for well I know that no mortal can defile the gods.—But, aged Teiresias, the wisest fall with a shameful fall, when they clothe shameful thoughts in fair words, for lucre's sake.

TE. Alas! Doth any man know, doth any consider . . .

CR. Whereof? What general truth dost thou announce?

TE. How precious, above all wealth, is good counsel.

CR. As folly, I think, is the worst mischief.

TE. Yet thou art tainted with that distemper.

CR. I would not answer the seer with a taunt.

TE. But thou dost, in saying that I prophesy falsely.

CR. Well, the prophet-tribe was ever fond of money.

TE. And the race bred of tyrants loves base gain.

CR. Knowest thou that thy speech is spoken of thy king?

TE. I know it; for through me thou hast saved Thebes.

CR. Thou art a wise seer; but thou lovest evil deeds.

TE. Thou wilt rouse me to utter the dread secret in my soul.

CR. Out with it!—Only speak it not for gain.

TE. Indeed, methinks, I shall not,—as touching thee.

CR. Know that thou shalt not trade on my resolve.

TE. Then know thou—aye, know it well—that thou shalt not live through many more courses of the sun's swift chariot, ere one begotten of thine own loins shall have been given by thee, a corpse for corpses; because thou hast thrust children of the sunlight to the shades, and ruthlessly lodged a living soul in the grave; but keepest in this

world one who belongs to the gods infernal, a corpse unburied, unhonoured, all unhallowed. In such thou hast no part, nor have the gods above, but this is a violence done to them by thee. Therefore the avenging destroyers lie in wait for thee, the Furies of Hades and of the gods, that thou mayest be taken in these same ills.

And mark well if I speak these things as a hireling. A time not long to be delayed shall awaken the wailing of men and of women in thy house. And a tumult of hatred against these stirrs all the cities whose mangled sons had the burial-rite from dogs, or from wild beasts, or from some winged bird that bore a polluting breath to each city that contains the hearths of the dead.

Such arrows for thy heart—since thou provokest me—have I launched at thee, archer-like, in my anger,—sure arrows, of which thou shalt not escape the smart.—Boy, lead me home, that he may spend his rage on younger men, and learn to keep a tongue more temperate, and to bear within his breast a better mind than now he bears.

[Exit TEIRESIAS.]

CH. The man hath gone, O king, with dread prophecies. And, since the hair on this head, once dark, hath been white, I know that he hath never been a false prophet to our city.

CR. I, too, know it well, and am troubled in soul. 'Tis dire to yield; but, by resistance, to smite my pride with ruin—this, too, is a dire choice.

CH. Son of Menoeceus, it behoves thee to take wise counsel.

CR. What should I do, then? Speak, and I will obey.

CH. Go thou, and free the maiden from her rocky chamber, and make a tomb for the unburied dead.

CR. And this is thy counsel? Thou wouldst have me yield?

CH. Yea, King, and with all speed; for swift harms from the gods cut short the folly of men.

CR. Ah me, 'tis hard, but I resign my cherished resolve,—I obey. We must not wage a vain war with destiny.

CH. Go, thou, and do these things; leave them not to others.

CR. Even as I am I'll go:—on, on, my servants, each and all of you,—take axes in your hands, and hasten to the ground that ye see yonder! Since our judgment hath taken this turn, I will be present to unloose her, as I myself bound her. My heart misgives me, 'tis best to keep the established laws, even to life's end.

CHORUS.

O thou of many names, glory of the Cadmeian bride, offspring of loud-thundering Zeus! thou who watchest over famed Italia, and reignest, where all guests are welcomed, in the sheltered plain of Eleusinian Deô! O Bacchus, dweller in Thebè, mother-city of Bacchants, by the softly-gliding stream of Ismenus, on the soil where the fierce dragon's teeth were sown!

Thou hast been seen where torch-flames glare through smoke, above the crests of the twin peaks, where move the Corycian nymphs, thy votaries, hard by Castalia's stream.

Thou comest from the ivy-mantled slopes of Nysa's hills, and from the shore green with many-clustered vines, while thy name is lifted up on strains of more than mortal power, as thou visitest the ways of Thebè:

Thebè, of all cities, thou holdest first in honour, thou, and thy mother whom the lightning smote; and now, when all our people is captive to a violent plague, come thou with healing feet over the Parnassian height, or over the moaning strait!

O thou with whom the stars rejoice as they move, the stars whose breath is fire; O master of the voices of the night; son begotten of Zeus; appear, O king, with thine attendant Thyiads, who in night-long frenzy dance before thee, the giver of good gifts, Iacchus!

[Enter MESSENGER, on the spectators' left hand.]

ME. Dwellers by the house of Cadmus and of Amphion, there is no estate of mortal life that I would ever praise or blame as settled. Fortune raises and Fortune humbles the lucky or unlucky from day to day, and no one can prophesy to men concerning those things which are established. For Creon was blest once, as I count bliss; he had saved this land of Cadmus from its foes; he was clothed with sole dominion in the land; he reigned, the glorious sire of princely children. And now all hath been lost. For when a man hath forfeited his pleasures, I count him not as living,—I hold him but a breathing corpse. Heap up riches in thy house, if thou wilt; live in kingly state; yet, if there be no gladness therewith, I would not give the shadow of a vapour for all the rest, compared with joy.

CH. And what is this new grief that thou hast to tell for our princes?

ME. Death; and the living are guilty for the dead.

CH. And who is the slayer? Who the stricken? Speak.

ME. Haemon hath perished; his blood hath been shed by no stranger.

CH. By his father's hand, or by his own?

ME. By his own, in wrath with his sire for the murder.

CH. O prophet, how true, then, hast thou proved thy word!

ME. These things stand thus; ye must consider of the rest.

CH. Lo, I see the hapless Eurydicè, Creon's wife, approaching; she comes from the house by chance, haply,—or because she knows the tidings of her son.

[Enter EURYDICÈ.]

EU. People of Thebes, I heard your words as I was going forth, to salute the goddess Pallas with my prayers. Even as I was loosing the fastenings of the gate, to open it, the message of a household woe smote on mine ear:—I sank back, terror-stricken, into the

arms of my handmaids, and my senses fled. But say again what the tidings were; I shall hear them as one who is no stranger to sorrow.

ME. Dear lady, I will witness of what I saw, and will leave no word of the truth untold. Why, indeed, should I soothe thee with words in which I must presently be found false? Truth is ever best.—I attended thy lord as his guide to the furthest part of the plain, where the body of Polyneices, torn by dogs, still lay unpitied. We prayed the goddess of the roads, and Pluto, in mercy to restrain thy wrath; we washed the dead with holy washing; and with freshly-plucked boughs we solemnly burned such relics as there were. We raised a high mound of his native earth; and then we turned away to enter the maiden's nuptial chamber with rocky couch, the caverned mansion of the bride of Death. And, from afar off, one of us heard a voice of loud wailing at that bride's unhallowed bower; and came to tell our master Creon.

And as the king drew nearer, doubtful sounds of a bitter cry floated around him; he groaned, and said in accents of anguish, 'Wretched that I am, can my foreboding be true? Am I going on the wofullest way that ever I went? My son's voice greets me.—Go, my servants,—haste ye nearer; and when ye have reached the tomb, pass through the gap, where the stones have been wrenched away, to the cell's very mouth,—and look, and see if 'tis Haemon's voice that I know, or if mine ear is cheated by the gods.'

This search, at our despairing master's word, we went to make; and in the furthest part of the tomb we descried *her* hanging by the neck, slung by a thread-wrought halter of fine linen; while *he* was embracing her with arms thrown around her waist,—bewailing the loss of his bride who is with the dead, and his father's deeds, and his own ill-starred love.

But his father, when he saw him, cried aloud with a dread cry and went in, and called to him with a voice of

wailing:—'Unhappy, what a deed hast thou done! What thought hath come to thee? What manner of mischance hath marred thy reason? Come forth, my child! I pray thee—I implore!' But the boy glared at him with fierce eyes, spat in his face, and, without a word of answer, drew his cross-hilted sword:—as his father rushed forth in flight, he missed his aim;—then, hapless one, wroth with himself, he straightway leaned with all his weight against his sword, and drove it, half its length, into his side; and, while sense lingered, he clasped the maiden to his faint embrace, and, as he gasped, sent forth on her pale cheek the swift stream of the oozing blood.

Corpse enfolding corpse he lies; he hath won his nuptial rites, poor youth, not here, yet in the halls of Death; and he hath witnessed to mankind that, of all curses which cleave to man, ill counsel is the sovereign curse.

[EURYDICE retires into the house.]

CH. What wouldst thou augur from this? The lady hath turned back, and is gone, without a word, good or evil.

ME. I, too, am startled; yet I nourish the hope that, at these sore tidings of her son, she cannot deign to give her sorrow public vent, but in the privacy of the house will set her handmaids to mourn the household grief. For she is not untaught of discretion, that she should err.

CH. I know not; but to me, at least, a strained silence seems to portend peril, no less than vain abundance of lament.

ME. Well, I will enter the house, and learn whether indeed she is not hiding some repressed purpose in the depths of a passionate heart. Yea, thou sayest well: excess of silence, too, may have a perilous meaning.

[Exit MESSENGER.]

[Enter CREON, on the spectators' left, with attendants, carrying the shrouded body of HAEMON on a bier.]

CH. Lo, yonder the king himself draws near, bearing that which tells

too clear a tale,—the work of no stranger's madness,—if we may say it,—but of his own misdeeds.

CREON.

Woe for the sins of a darkened soul, stubborn sins, fraught with death! Ah, ye behold us, the sire who hath slain, the son who hath perished! Woe is me, for the wretched blindness of my counsels! Alas, my son, thou hast died in thy youth, by a timeless doom, woe is me!—thy spirit hath fled,—not by thy folly, but by mine own!

CHORUS.

Ah me, how all too late thou seemest to see the right!

CREON.

Ah me, I have learned the bitter lesson! But then, methinks, oh then, some god smote me from above with crushing weight, and hurled me into ways of cruelty, woe is me,—overthrowing and trampling on my joy! Woe, woe, for the troublous toils of men!

[Enter MESSENGER from the house.]

ME. Sire, thou hast come, methinks, as one whose hands are not empty, but who hath store laid up besides; thou bearest yonder burden with thee; and thou art soon to look upon the woes within thy house.

CR. And what worse ill is yet to follow upon ills?

ME. Thy queen hath died, true mother of yon corpse—ah, hapless lady!—by blows newly dealt.

CREON.

Oh Hades, all-receiving, whom no sacrifice can appease! Hast thou, then, no mercy for me? O thou herald of evil, bitter tidings, what word dost thou utter? Alas, I was already as dead, and thou hast smitten me anew! What sayest thou, my son? What is this new message that thou bringest—woe, woe is me!—of a wife's doom,—of slaughter heaped on slaughter?

CH. Thou canst behold: 'tis no longer hidden within.

[The doors of the palace are opened, and the corpse of EURYDICE is disclosed.]

CREON.

Ah me,—yonder I behold a new, a second woe! What destiny, ah what, can yet await me? I have but now raised my son in my arms,—and there, again, I see a corpse before me! Alas, alas, unhappy mother! Alas, my child!

ME. There, at the altar, self-stabbed with a keen knife, she suffered her darkening eyes to close, when she had wailed for the noble fate of Megareus who died before, and then for his fate who lies there,—and when, with her last breath, she had invoked evil fortunes upon thee, the slayer of thy sons.

CREON.

Woe, woe! I thrill with dread. Is there none to strike me to the heart with two-edged sword?—O miserable that I am, and steeped in miserable anguish!

ME. Yea, both this son's doom, and that other's, were laid to thy charge by her whose corpse thou seest.

CR. And what was the manner of the violent deed by which she passed away?

ME. Her own hand struck her to the heart, when she had learned her son's sorely lamented fate.

CREON.

Ah me, this guilt can never be fixed on any other of mortal kind, for my acquittal! I, even I, was thy slayer, wretched that I am—I own the truth. Lead me away, O my servants, lead me hence with all speed, whose life is but as death!

CH. Thy counsels are good, if there can be good with ills; briefest is best, when trouble is in our path.

CREON.

Oh, let it come, let it appear, that fairest of fates for me, that brings my last day,—aye, best fate of all! Oh, let it come, that I may never look upon to-morrow's light.

CH. These things are in the future; present tasks claim our care: the ordering of the future rests where it should rest.

CR. All my desires, at least, were summed in that prayer.

CH. Pray thou no more; for mortals have no escape from destined woe.

CREON.

Lead me away, I pray you; a rash, foolish man; who have slain thee, ah

my son, unwittingly, and thee, too, my wife—unhappy that I am! I know not which way I should bend my gaze, or where I should seek support; for all is amiss with that which is in my hands,—and yonder, again, a crushing fate hath leapt upon my head.

[As CREON is being conducted into the house, the Coryphaeus speaks the closing verses.]

CHORUS.

Wisdom is the supreme part of happiness; and reverence towards the gods must be inviolate. Great words of prideful men are ever punished with great blows, and, in old age, teach the chastened to be wise.

MENAECHMI *

OR THE TWO MENAECHMUSES

PLAUTUS

Translated by *Paul Nixon*

CHARACTERS

PENICULUS, *a parasite.*

MENAECHMUS, *a young gentleman living in Epidamnus.*

MENAECHMUS (SOSICLES), *a young gentleman of Syracuse.*

EROTIUM, *a courtesan.*

CYLINDRUS, *her cook.*

MESSENIUS, *slave of Menaechmus (Sosicles).*

MAID, *in the service of Erotium.*

WIFE of Menaechmus.

FATHER-IN-LAW of Menaechmus.

A DOCTOR.

SCENE—Epidamnus. A street in which stand the houses of Menaechmus and Erotium.

ARGUMENT

A Sicilian merchant, who had twin sons, died after one of them had been stolen. To the boy who was left at home his paternal grandfather gave the name of the stolen brother, calling him Menaechmus instead of Sosicles. And this boy, after he grew up, began searching for his brother in every land. At last he comes to Epidamnus: here it was that his stolen brother had been brought up. Everyone takes the stranger for their own fellow-citizen Menaechmus, and he is so addressed by his brother's mistress, wife, and father-in-law. At last the brothers recognise each other.

PROLOGUE.

First and foremost, spectators, I am the bearer of the very best wishes for—myself and—you. I bring you Plautus, orally, not corporally, and I pray

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you receive him with amiable ears. Lend me your attention and learn our argument now; I will frame it in the fewest possible words.

Now writers of comedy have this habit: they always allege that the scene of action is Athens, their object being to give the play a more Grecian air. As for me, I will report the scene as being nowhere, save where, by report, the events occurred. And though this argument is à la Greek, yet it is not à l'Attic but rather à la Sicilian. So much by way of antelude to this argument; now I will give you your rations of the argument itself, not by the peck or three peck measure, but by the very granary—such is my generosity in giving arguments!

There was a certain old merchant in Syracuse who had twin sons born him, so much alike that their foster mother who suckled them could not distinguish them, nor even their real mother who gave them birth—so I was told, at least, by a man who had seen the boys; I myself have not seen them, and none of you is to suppose I have. When the boys were now seven years old, their father loaded a large ship with many articles of merchandise; one twin he put aboard and took away with himself to Tarentum, his place of trade, the other being left with his mother at home. At Tarentum it happened they were having a festival when he arrived. Many people had congregated, as they do at festivals; the boy strayed from his father in the crowd. A certain merchant of Epidamnus was there; this merchant picked the boy up and took

him off to Epidamnus. As for the father, after he lost his son he was broken-hearted and died of grief at Tarentum a few days later.

When news of all this—how the boy was stolen and his father dead at Tarentum—got back to Syracuse to the boys' grandfather, he changed the name of this other twin. See what a deep affection he had for that other boy, the stolen one! He gave that boy's name to the one at home, calling him Menaechmus, the name of his lost brother. This was the name of the grandfather himself, too,—[*confidentially*]. I remember his name the more easily for having seen him vociferously dunned. To keep you from going astray later, I herewith forewarn you—both twins have the same name.

Now I must [*chuckling*] foot it back to Epidamnus so as to clarify this situation for you perfectly. If any one of you should want any business transacted for him in Epidamnus, command me freely and speak out—that is, in case you furnish the wherewithal for the transaction. For if a man has not furnished the necessary funds, it will come to nothing; if he has furnished them, it will come to—less than nothing. However, I return to the place I left, yes, and without stirring a step.

That Epidamnian I mentioned some time ago, who stole that other twin, had no children at all except his money. He adopted that kidnapped boy and gave him a wife with a dowry, and made him his heir by his own demise. For he happened one day to be going to the country after a heavy rain, and while he was trying to ford a rapid stream quite near the city, the rapids rapt the feet of the boy's abductor from beneath him and swept him off to perdition. His enormous fortune fell to his adopted son. And there it is [*pointing to house*] that this stolen twin lives.

Now that twin whose home is in Syracuse will come to-day to Epidamnus, with his servant, in search of this twin brother of his. This city [*with a wave toward the houses on the stage*]

is Epidamnus, during the presentation of this play; when another play is presented it will become another town. It is quite like the way in which families, too, are wont to change their homes: now a pimp lives here, now a young gentleman, now an old one, now a poor man, a beggar, a king, a parasite, a seer.

ACT I

SCENE I.

[*Enter PENICULUS, looking dejected.*]

PEN. The young fellows have given me the name of Brush,¹ the reason being that when I eat I sweep the table clean. [*with fervour*] Men that bind prisoners of war with chains and fasten shackles on runaway slaves are awful fools, at least in my opinion. Why, if the poor devil has this extra trouble on his shoulders, too, he's all the keener for escape and mischief. Why, they get out of their chains somehow. As for those in shackles, they file away the ring, or knock the rivet off with a stone. Nonsensical measures! The man you really want to keep from running off ought to be bound with [*sighing*] food and drink. A loaded table—[*smacking his lips*] tie his snout to that! Just you deal him out meat and drink to suit his pleasure and his appetite each day, and he'll never run—Lord, no!—no matter if he's done a deed for hanging. You'll keep him easily so long as you bind him with these bonds. They're such extraordinarily tenacious bonds, these belly-bands: the more you stretch 'em, the closer they cling. Here's my case—I'm going to Menaechmus here [*pointing to house*], whose bond servant I've been for many a day, going of my own accord to let him bind me. Why, [*enthusiastically*] that man doesn't merely feed men, he nurtures them and re-creates them; a better doctor can't be found. Here's the sort of young fellow he is: a splendid trencherman

¹ the meaning of *Peniculus*.

himself, he gives you dinners fit for the festival of Ceres; piles up the courses so, erects such heaps of lovely panny things, you must stand on your couch if you want anything from off the top. [*pauses, then sadly*] But for now these many days there has been a gap in my invitations; and all this time I've kept fast at home with my [*lingeringly*] dear ones. For not a thing do I eat or buy that isn't, oh, so dear! And now another point is—these dears I've marshalled are deserting me. [*looking towards MENAECHEMUS'S house*] So here's for a call on him. But the door's opening! Aha! I see Menaechmus himself! he's coming out! [*steps back*]

SCENE II.

[*Enter MENAECHEMUS, followed to the doorway by his wife.*]

MEN. [*angrily*] If you weren't mean, if you weren't stupid, if you weren't a violent virago, what you see displeases your husband would be displeasing to you, too. Now mark my words, if you act like this toward me after to-day, you shall hie yourself home to your father as a divorcee. Why, whenever I want to go out, you catch hold of me, call me back, cross-question me as to where I'm going, what I'm doing, what business I have in hand, what I'm after, what I've got, what I did when I was out. I've married a custom-house officer, judging from the way everything—all I've done and am doing—must be declared. I've pampered you too much; now then, I'll state my future policy. Inasmuch as I keep you well provided with maids, food, woollen cloth, jewellery, coverlets, purple dresses, and you lack for nothing, you [*with emphasis*] will look out for trouble if you're wise, and cease spying on your husband. [*in lower tone as his wife goes back inside*] And furthermore, that you may not watch me for nothing, I'll reward your diligence by taking a wench to dinner and inviting myself out somewhere.

PEN. [*aside, mournfully*] The fellow pretends to be abusing his wife, when he is abusing me; for if he dines out, it's certainly me, not his wife, he punishes.

MEN. [*elated*] Hurrah! By Jove, at last my lecture has driven her away from the door! Where are your married gallants? Why don't they all hurry up with gifts and congratulations for my valiant fight? [*showing a woman's mantle worn underneath his cloak*] This mantle I just now stole from my wife inside there, and [*gleefully*] it's going to a wench. This is the way to do—to cheat a cunning gaoler in such clever style! Ah, this is a beautiful job, a handsome job, a neat job, a workmanlike job! I've done the wretch out of this—[*dryly*] and done myself, too!—and it's on the road to [*glancing at EROTIVM'S house*] ruin. [*pauses, then cheerfully*] I have taken booty from the enemy without loss to my allies.

PEN. [*loudly, from his retreat*] Hi, sir! Is there some share in that booty for me?

MEN. [*startled and covering mantle again*] Good Lord! Detected!

PEN. Oh no, protected! Never fear!

MEN. Who goes there?

PEN. [*stepping forward*] I.

MEN. [*vastly relieved*] Ah there, old Timeliness! Ah there, old Opportunity! Good day! [*extends his hand*]

PEN. [*taking it*] Good day, sir.

MEN. And what are you doing with yourself?

PEN. Shaking hands with my guardian angel.

MEN. You couldn't have arrived at a more fitting time for me.

PEN. A habit of mine; I know every juncture of timeliness.

MEN. Do you want to set your eyes on a rich treat?

PEN. What cook cooked it? I shall know if there has been a culinary slip as soon as I see the leavings.

MEN. Tell me, have you ever seen a wall painting showing the eagle

making off with Catameitus,² or Venus with Adonis?

PEN. Often. But what have such pictures got to do with me?

MEN. [*revealing the mantle*] Come, cast your eye on me. Do I look at all like them?

PEN. What sort of a get-up is that?

MEN. Say that I'm a splendid fellow.

PEN. [*suspiciously*] What are we going to eat?

MEN. Just you say what I command.

PEN. [*listlessly*] I do—splendid fellow.

MEN. Won't you add something of your own?

PEN. [*with a sigh*] The jolliest sort of fellow, too.

MEN. Go on, go on!

PEN. [*indignant*] By gad, I will not go on, without knowing what good it does me. You and your wife are at odds, so I am on my guard against you all the more guardedly.

MEN. [*reassuringly*] But there's a place she's unaware of, where we can have a beautiful time and fairly burn up this day.

PEN. [*eagerly*] Come, come, then, by all means! fairly spoken! Now how soon shall I kindle the pyre? Why the day is half dead already, dead down to its navel.

MEN. You delay yourself by interrupting me.

PEN. Knock my eye clean through its socket, Menaechmus, if I utter a single word—without your orders.

MEN. [*edging away from his house*] Come over here away from the door.

PEN. [*obeying*] All right.

MEN. [*elaborately cautious*] Here, still farther.

PEN. Very well.

MEN. [*still retreating*] Be a man—come still farther from that lioness's lair.

PEN. [*laughing*] Bravo! Gad, you certainly would make a fine charioteer, I do believe.

² Ganymede, carried up to Jupiter.

MEN. Why so?

PEN. You look back so often to make sure your wife is not catching up with you.

MEN. But what do you say—

PEN. I? Why, whatever you want—that's what I say and unsay.

MEN. If you happened to smell something, would the odour enable you to conjecture?

PEN. * * * the Board of Augurs should be consulted.

MEN. [*holding out the lower edge of the mantle*] Come on now, test the odour of this mantle I have. What does it smell of? [*as PENICULUS draws back*] Holding off?

PEN. The upper part of a woman's gown is the part to sniff; why, that part there taints the nose with an odour that's indetergible.

MEN. [*holding out another part*] Sniff here, then, Peniculus. What dainty airs you give yourself!

PEN. So I should. [*sniffs warily*]

MEN. Well now? What does it smell of? Answer.

PEN. A raid! a jade! a meal! I hope you have * * *

MEN. Right you are! Yes, I'll take it to my mistress Erotium, the courtesan here [*pointing*] at once. I'll order luncheon to be prepared for us immediately, for me and you and her.

PEN. Capital!

MEN. Then we'll drink and keep on drinking till the morrow's star of morn appears.

PEN. Capital! You talk to the point. [*eyeing EROTIIUM's door anxiously*] Shall I knock now?

MEN. Knock away. [*maliciously, as PENICULUS hurries to the door*] Or, rather, wait a bit.

PEN. [*gloomily*] You've put the tankard back a mile.

MEN. Knock gently.

PEN. I dare say you fear the door is made of Stian crockery. [*about to knock lustily when the door moves*]

MEN. [*rapturously*] Wait, wait, for heaven's sake, wait! Look! she's coming out herself! Ah, you see the sun—

is it not positively bedimmed in comparison with the brilliance of her body?

SCENE III.

[Enter EROTIUM.]

EROT. [*fondly*] My darling Menaechnus! Good day!

PEN. What about me?

EROT. [*disdainfully*] You don't count.

PEN. [*cheerfully*] A statement that applies in the army, too—it has its supernumeraries.

MEN. I should like to have a [*with a nod at PENICULUS*] battle prepared for me at your house there to-day.

EROT. [*puzzled, then with a smile*] To-day you shall have one.

MEN. In this battle we'll both [*indicating parasite*] drink; whichever proves himself the better tankard fighter is your army: you be the judge as to—which you're to spend the night with. [*gazing at her amorously*] Oh, how I do hate my wife when I look at you, precious!

EROT. [*spying the fringe of the mantle*] Meanwhile you can't keep from wearing part of her wardrobe! [*examining it*] What is this?

MEN. [*lifting his cloak*] You're arrayed and my wife's raided, rosey.

EROT. [*pleased*] Oh, of all my lovers you make me love you most, easily!

PEN. [*aside*] A courtesan is all cajolery as long as she sees something to seize upon. [*to EROTIUM*] Why, if you really loved him, you ought to have bitten his nose off by now.³

MEN. [*removing his cloak*] Hold this, Peniculus; I want to make the offering I vowed.

PEN. Give it here; [*grinning at him*] but do, for heaven's sake, dance just as you are, with the mantle on, afterwards. [*takes cloak*]

MEN. [*irritably*] Dance? I? Lord, man, you're crazy!

PEN. Which is more so, you or I? If you won't dance,⁴ take it off, then.

³ i.e. by kissing him passionately.

⁴ The lewd stage dancers (*cinaedi*) wore the *palla*.

MEN. [*removing mantle*] It was an awful risk I ran stealing this to-day. It's my opinion Hercules never ran such a tremendous risk when he got away with the girdle of Hippolyta. [*handing it to EROTIUM*] Take it for your own, seeing you are the only living soul that likes to do what I like.

EROT. [*petting him*] That's the spirit that should inspire nice lovers.

PEN. [*aside, dryly*] At least such as are over-eager to plunge themselves into beggary.

MEN. I bought that mantle last year for my wife, and it stood me in sixteen pounds.

PEN. [*aside*] Sixteen pounds indubitably done for, according to account rendered!

MEN. Do you know what I want you to see to?

EROT. I know, I'll see to what you want.

MEN. Well, then, have luncheon prepared for the three of us at your house, and have some real delicacies purchased at the forum—[*looking amused at the intent PENICULUS*] savoury kernelets of pork, dried hammylets, half a pig's head, or something of the sort—things that make me hungry as a kite when served up to me well-done. And quickly, too!

EROT. Oh yes, by all means.

MEN. We'll go over to the forum. Soon we'll be back here; while things are cooking we'll employ the time in drinking.

EROT. Come when you wish; we'll get ready for you.

MEN. Only do hurry. [*to PENICULUS, unceremoniously*] Follow me, you. [*going*]

PEN. [*at his heels*] That I will, by Jove! Watch you and follow you, both! I wouldn't take the treasures of heaven on condition of losing you this day. [*Exeunt.*]

EROT. [*going to her door and speaking to the maids within*] Call my cook Cylindrus out here at once.

SCENE IV.

[Enter CYLINDRUS.]

EROT. Take a basket and some money. *[counting out some coins]* There! That's six shillings for you.

CYL. Right, ma'am.

EROT. Go and get some provisions; see you get enough for three—neither too little nor too much.

CYL. What sort of folks will they be?

EROT. I and Menaechmus and his parasite.

CYL. That makes ten already, ma'am; for a parasite easily does the duty of eight men.

EROT. I have told you about the guests; attend to the rest.

CYL. *[bustling off importantly]* Of course, ma'am. The meal is cooked; tell 'em to go in and take their places.

EROT. Come back quickly.

CYL. I'll be here directly.

[Exeunt.]

ACT II

SCENE I.

[Half an hour has elapsed.]

[Enter MENAECHMUS SOSICLES and MESSENIO, followed at distance by slaves with luggage.]

MEN. S. There is no pleasure sailors have, in my opinion, Messenio, greater than sighting from the deep the distant land.

MES. *[sulky]* It's a greater one, to put it plainly, if the land you see, as you near the shore, was once your own. But look here, sir, why have we come now to Epidamnus? Or are we, like the sea, to go around all the islands?

MEN. S. To hunt for my own twin brother.

MES. Well, what's to be the limit to hunting for him? This is the sixth year we've been at the job. Istrians, Spaniards, Massilians, Illyrians, the entire Adriatic, and foreign Greece^s and the whole coast of Italy—every

^s Magna Graecia.

section the sea washes—we've visited in our travels. If you were hunting for a needle you'd have found it long ago, I do believe, if it existed. It's a dead man we keep hunting for amongst the living; why, we should have found him long ago if he were alive.

MEN. S. Well then, I'm hunting for someone who can prove that to me, who can say he knows my brother is dead; I'll never take up again the task of hunting for him after that. But failing that, I'll never abandon it so long as I'm alive. I alone know how dear he is to me.

MES. *[impatiently]* You're hunting for a knot in a bulrush. Why don't we go back home—that is, unless we're going to write a book of travels?

MEN. S. *[sharply]* Do what you're told, eat what you're given, and beware of trouble. Don't annoy me—this business will not be conducted to suit you.

MES. *[aside, peevishly]* There you are! Talk like that shows me I'm a slave. He couldn't make the case clear more concisely. But just the same I can't keep from speaking out. *[aloud]* Listen to me, sir, will you? By gad, when I inspect the wallet, our touring fund looks precious summerly. Unless you return home, by gad, I warrant you when your cash gives out while you're hunting for your twin, you'll certainly have a twinge. I tell you what, the sort of people you find here is this: in Epidamnus are the very worst of rakes and drinkers. And then the swindlers and sharpers that live in this city, no end to 'em! And then the harlot wenches—nowhere on earth are they more alluring, people say! This city got its name of Epidamnus for just this reason—because almost everyone that stops here gets damaged.

MEN. S. *[dryly]* I shall look out for that. Come, hand the wallet over to me.

MES. What do you want with it?

MEN. S. I have my fears of you now, from what you say.

MES. Fears of what?

MEN. S. Of your doing me some

damage in Epidamnus. You, Messenio, are a great lover of the ladies, while I am a choleric man, of ungovernable temper; so long as I hold the money I'll guard against both dangers—a slip on your part, and resultant cholera on my own.

MES. [*handing him the wallet, aggrieved*] Take it and keep it, do. Delighted that you should.

SCENE II.

[*Enter CYLINDRUS with provisions.*]

CYL. [*stopping and examining the contents of his basket approvingly.*] Good marketing, this, and just to my taste, too. I'll set a good lunch before the lunchers. [*looking about*] Hullo, though! There's Menaechmus! Oh, my poor back! The guests are strolling about in front of the door before I'm back with the provisions! I'll up and speak to him. [*approaches*] Good day, Menaechmus.

MEN. S. [*surprised*] The Lord love you, my man, whoever you are!

CYL. [*surprised in turn*] Whoever? Who I am?

MEN. S. Gad! Indeed I don't know!

CYL. [*deciding he jokes*] Where are the other guests?

MEN. S. What guests are you looking for?

CYL. [*grinning*] Your parasite.

MEN. S. My parasite? [*to MESSENIO*] The fellow is certainly insane.

MES. Didn't I tell you there was no end of swindlers here?

MEN. S. What parasite of mine are you looking for, young man?

CYL. Brush.

MES. Brush? I've got that safe in the knapsack. Look!

CYL. [*paying no attention to him*] You've come here to lunch too soon, Menaechmus. I'm just getting back with the provisions.

MEN. S. [*gravely*] Answer me this, young man: how much do pigs cost here, sound pigs, for sacrifice?

CYL. [*mystified*] Two shillings.

MEN. S. Take two shillings from me; get yourself purified at my expense. For really it's quite clear you are insane—to bother an unknown man like me, whoever you are.

CYL. But I'm Cylindrus. Don't you know my name?

MEN. S. [*bored*] Whether you are Cylindrus or Pistonus, be hanged to you! I don't know you, and more than that, I have no wish to know you.

CYL. Your name is Menaechmus, at least as far as I know.

MEN. S. You talk rationally when you call me by name. But where did you know me?

CYL. Where did I know you, when my mistress is your sweetheart Erotium here? [*indicating house*]

MEN. S. Not mine, by gad! And as for you, I don't know who you are.

CYL. Don't know who I am, I, who serve you your wine so often when you are drinking there?

MES. [*hotly*] Oh, blast it! Not to have a thing to smash in the fellow's head with!

MEN. S. You accustomed to serve me my wine, when I never saw or set foot in Epidamnus before this day?

CYL. You deny it?

MEN. S. Gad! Indeed I do deny it!

CYL. Don't you live in that house yonder?

MEN. S. [*wrathful*] Heaven's curse light on those that do live there!

CYL. [*aside*] He's the insane one, to be cursing his own self! [*aloud*] Listen here, Menaechmus.

MEN. S. What is it?

CYL. If you asked my advice, sir, you'd take that two shillings you recently promised me—for, by gad, it's certainly you that are lacking in sanity, to curse your own self a moment ago—and order a porker to be brought to you, if you have any sense.

MES. Hear that! By gad, what a windy chap! He makes me tired.

CYL. [*to audience*] He often likes to joke with me this way. He's ever so humorous—when his wife's not by. [*to MENAECHMUS*] I say, sir.

MEN. S. Well, what do you want?

CYL. [*pointing to basket*] Are these provisions you see enough for the three of you, or shall I get more, for you and the parasite and the lady?

MEN. S. What ladies, what parasites, are you talking about, man?

MES. What possesses you, to bother this gentleman?

CYL. [*to MESSENIO, irately*] What have you to do with me? I don't know you; I'm talking with this gentleman I do know.

MES. Lord, man, you're not sane; I know that for sure.

CYL. [*to MENAECHEMUS*] Well, sir, these things shall be cooked directly, I promise you, without delay. So don't wander too far from the house. [*about to go*] Anything more I can do for you?

MEN. S. Yes, go straight to the devil. [*turns away*]

CYL. [*vehemently*] By gad, you'd better go, meanwhile, yourself—to the couch, while I [*superbly, with a wave toward the basket*] expose these things to Vulcan's violence, I'll go inside and tell Erotium you're here, so that she may bring you in rather than leave you standing here outside. [*Exit.*]

MEN. S. Gone now, has he? By Jove! I perceive those statements of yours were no lies.

MES. Just you keep your eyes open; for I do believe some harlot wench lives there, precisely as that madman, who just now left us, said.

MEN. S. But I wonder how he knew my name?

MES. [*with an air of vastly superior wisdom*] Lord, sir, nothing wonderful in that! This is a custom harlots have: they send their artful slaves and maids down to the port; if any foreign ship comes in, they inquire where she hails from and what her owner's name is, and then they immediately affix themselves, glue themselves fast to him. Once he's seduced, they send him home a wreck. Now in that port there [*pointing to EROTUM's house*] lies a pirate bark that I surely think we'd better beware of.

MEN. S. Gad, that's certainly good advice you give.

MES. [*dissatisfied*] I'll know it's good advice when you take good care, and not before.

MEN. S. [*listening*] Sh-h! Keep still a moment! The door creaked—let's see who is coming out.

MES. [*dropping the knapsack*] Meanwhile I'll put this down. [*to the sailors, superciliously, pointing to luggage*] Kindly watch this stuff, ye ship propellers.

SCENE III.

[*Enter EROTUM into the doorway.*]

EROT. [*to maids within*] Leave the door so; go along, I don't want it shut. Get ready inside, look out for things, see to things, do what's necessary. [*to other maids*] Cover the couches, burn some perfumes; daintiness is what lures lovers' hearts. Attractive surroundings mean the lovers' loss and our gain. [*looking about*] But where is that man the cook said was in front of the house? Ah yes. I see him—it's the friend I find so useful, so uncommonly helpful. And accordingly I let him quite lord it in my house as he deserves. I'll step up to him at once and give him a welcome. [*approaching MENAECHEMUS*] Why, you darling boy, it surprises me that you should stand here outdoors when my doors are open for you and this house is more yours than your own house is. Everything is ready as you ordered and wished, and you'll meet with no delay inside. Our luncheon here has been seen to, as you ordered; you may go in and take your place when you like.

MEN. S. [*to MESSENIO, mystified*] To whom is this woman talking?

EROT. [*surprised*] To you, of course.

MEN. S. What have you had to do with me, now or ever?

EROT. [*gaily, thinking he jests*] Why, bless your heart, it has pleased Venus that I should prize you as the one man of men—and not without your deserving it. For, mercy me! you alone, with all your generosity, make me prosper.

MEN. S. [*aside to MESSENIOS*] This woman is certainly either insane or drunk, Messenio, to address a stranger like me so familiarly.

MES. Didn't I tell you that was the way they did here? These are mere falling leaves compared with what'll happen if we stay here the next three days; then trees will fall on you. Yes, sir, harlots are like that here—they're all silver seductresses. But you just let me have a word with her. [*to EROTUM, who has been looking in at her door*] Hey there, madam! I am speaking to you.

EROT. What is it?

MES. Where did you know this gentleman?

EROT. In the same place where he has long known me, in Epidamnus.

MES. Epidamnus? When he's never set foot in this town except to-day?

EROT. Tut, tut, my smart sir! Menaechmus mine, come inside, why don't you, there's a dear. You'll find it nicer in here.

MEN. S. [*aside to MESSENIOS*] Good Lord! Now here's this woman calling me by my right name! I certainly do wonder what in the world it all means.

MES. She's scented the wallet you have.

MEN. S. By Jove, yes, you have warned me wisely! Here, you take it. [*hands wallet to MESSENIOS*] Now I'll know whether it's me or my wallet she's in love with.

EROT. [*taking his arm*] Let's go in and have luncheon.

MEN. S. [*puzzled*] Very kind of you; no, thanks.

EROT. Then why did you order me to cook luncheon for you a while ago?

MEN. S. I ordered you to cook it?

EROT. Certainly, for you and your parasite.

MEN. S. What parasite, confound it? [*aside to MESSENIOS*] There's certainly something wrong with the woman's wits.

EROT. Brush, I mean.

MEN. S. What brush is that? One you clean your shoes with?

EROT. Why, the one, of course, that

came with you a while ago when you brought me the mantle you stole from your wife.

MEN. S. What's this? I gave you a mantle I stole from my wife? Are you sane? [*to MESSENIOS*] At any rate, this woman dreams standing up, hors fashion.

EROT. [*a little irritated*] Why is it you like to make a laughing-stock of me and deny what you did?

MEN. S. Tell me what it is I did and deny.

EROT. Giving me your wife's mantle to-day.

MEN. S. I deny it still. Why, I never had a wife, and have none now, and never from the day I was born have I put a foot within your city gate here. I lunched on board ship, then came ashore here, and met you.

EROT. [*aside, alarmed about him*] Look at that! Oh dear, this is dreadful! [*to MENAECHEMUS*] What is this ship you're telling me of?

MEN. S. [*flippantly*] A wooden affair, often battered about, often nailed, often pounded with a hammer; it's like a furrier's furniture, peg close to peg.

EROT. [*relieved by his jocularly and drawing him toward her door*] Now, now, do stop joking, there's a dear, and come along this way with me.

MEN. S. [*releasing himself*] It is some other man you are looking for, madam, not me.

EROT. I not know you—[*playfully, as if repeating a lesson*] Menaechmus, the son of Moschus, born, so they say, in Syracuse in Sicily, where King Agathocles reigned, and after him Phintia, and thirdly Liparo, who at his death left his kingdom to Hiero, the present ruler?

MEN. S. [*more perplexed*] You are quite correct, madam.

MES. [*aside, to MENAECHEMUS*] Great Jupiter! The woman doesn't come from there, does she, to have your history so pat?

MEN. S. By gad, I fancy I can't go on refusing her. [*moves toward her door*]

MES. [*alarmed*] Don't do that! You're lost, if you cross that threshold!

MEN. S. See here now, you shut up. Things are going well. I'll assent to whatever the wench says, if I can come in for entertainment here. [*confidentially* to EROTIIUM, *motioning* MESSENIO *back*] I kept contradicting you a while ago purposely, my girl; I was afraid of this fellow [*indicating* MESSENIO]—that he might inform my wife of the mantle and the luncheon. Now when you wish let's go inside.

EROT. Shall you wait any longer for the parasite?

MEN. S. Not I—I neither wait for him nor care a straw for him, nor want him admitted if he does come.

EROT. Goodness me, I'll see to that without reluctance! [*fondling him*] But do you know what I should love you to do?

MEN. S. Whatever you wish—you have only to command me.

EROT. Take that mantle you gave me a while ago to the embroiderer, so as to have it repaired and have some trimmings I want added.

MEN. S. Right you are, by Jove! That will make it look different, too, and my wife won't recognize it on you, if she notices it on the street.

EROT. Well then, take it with you later when you leave me.

MEN. S. By all means.

EROT. Let's go in.

MEN. S. I'll follow you directly. I want another word with this fellow. [*indicating* MESSENIO]

[*Exit* EROTIIUM.]

Hullo! Messenio! Step up here.

MES. [*morose*] What's all this?

MEN. S. [*elated*] Dance a jig!

MES. What's the need of that?

MEN. S. There is need. [*rather apologetic*] I know what you'll call me.

MES. So much the worse of you.

MEN. S. The booty's mine! Such siegeworks as I've begun! Be off as fast as you can; take those fellows [*pointing to sailors*] to an inn at once. Then see you come to meet me before sunset.

MES. You don't know those harlots, master.

MEN. S. Hold your tongue, I tell you. It will hurt me, not you, if I play the fool. This woman is a fool, and a silly one; from what I've just observed, there's booty for us here.

[*Exit into the house.*]

MES. [*as if to call him back*] Oh Lord! You're gone already? Lord help him! The pirate bark is towing our yacht to perdition. But I'm a silly one to expect to manage my master; he bought me to obey his orders, not to be his commander-in-chief. [*to the sailors*] Follow me, so that I can come to meet him in season as he commanded. [*Exeunt.*]

ACT III

SCENE I.

[*Several hours have elapsed.*]

[*Enter* PENICULUS.]

PEN. [*in high dudgeon*] More than thirty years I've lived, and never in all that time have I done a worse or more accursed deed than to-day when I immersed myself, poor fool, in the middle of that public meeting. While I was gaping there, Menaechmus gave me the slip, and made off to his mistress, I suppose, without caring to take me along. May all the powers above consume the fellow that first devised the holding of public meetings, to busy busy men! Shouldn't they choose men with nothing to do for that sort of thing, and fine 'em forthwith if they fail to appear at the roll call? There's a plenty of men that get edibles to eat only once a day, men with no business on hand, men that are neither invited out nor invite anyone in to eat: they're the ones that ought to devote themselves to public meetings and assemblies. If this had been the rule, I shouldn't have lost my lunch to-day—for sure as I'm alive I believe he was willing to give me one. I'll join him; even now I have my sweet hopes of the leavings. [*goes towards* EROTIIUM'S

house as MENAECHMUS SOSICLES comes into the doorway, wreathed and carrying the mantle] But what do I see? Menaechmus coming out with a garland on! [*grimly*] The banquet's cleared away, and, by gad, I've come just in time to see him home! [*withdrawing*] I'll observe what the fellow's up to. Then I'll up and have a word with him.

SCENE II.

MEN. S. [*to EROTIVM within*] Can't you rest easy? I'll bring this back to you to-day in good season, all put in trim nicely and prettily. [*chuckling to himself*] You'll say you haven't got this one, I warrant,—it will look so unfamiliar.

PEN. [*aside, angrily*] He's carrying the mantle to the embroiderer's, now the lunch is finished and the wine drunk, while the parasite's been shut out of doors! By heaven, I'm not the man I am if I don't avenge this injury and myself in beautiful style! You watch what I'll give you!

MEN. S. [*leaving the doorway, jubilant*] Ye immortal gods! Did ye ever in a single day bestow more blessings on any man who hoped for less? I've lunched, drunk, enjoyed the wench, and made off with this mantle, whose owner will never see it more.

PEN. [*aside*] I can't quite catch what he's talking about from this hiding-place; is it about me and the part I played, now that he's stuffed himself?

MEN. S. She said I gave this to her, yes, and stole it from my wife! Seeing she was making a mistake, I at once began to agree with her, as if I had had dealings with her; whatever she said, I'd say the same. In short, I never had a good time anywhere at less expense.

PEN. [*aside, his anger rising*] I'll up to the fellow! Oh, I'm aching for a row! [*steps forward*]

MEN. S. [*aside*] Who's this advancing on me?

PEN. See here, you rascal lighter than a feather, you base, villainous

scoundrel, you outrage of a man, you tricky good-for-nothing! What have I ever done to you that you should spoil my life? How you sneaked off from me at the forum a while ago! You've interred the luncheon, and I not there! How did you dare do it, when I was as much its heir as you?

MEN. S. [*with dignity*] Sir, what have you to do with me, pray, that I, a perfect stranger, should meet with your abuse? [*dangerously*] Or do you want to be given a bad time in return for this bad language?

PEN. [*groaning*] Oh Lord! You've given me that already, I perceive, good Lord, yes!

MEN. S. Pray answer me, sir, what is your name?

PEN. What? Making fun of me, as if you didn't know my name?

MEN. S. Good Lord, man, I have never seen you or known you before this day, so far as I know; but—whoever you are, this much is sure—if you want to do the decent thing, don't annoy me.

PEN. Wake up, Menaechmus!

MEN. S. Gad! why, I am awake, so far as I know.

PEN. You don't know me?

MEN. S. I should not deny it, if I did know you.

PEN. Not know your own parasite?

MEN. S. Sir, your headpiece is out of order, I perceive.

PEN. Answer me—didn't you steal that mantle from your wife to-day and give it to Erotium?

MEN. S. Lord, Lord! I neither have a wife, nor gave the mantle to Erotium, nor stole it.

PEN. Really, are you sane? [*aside, in despair*] My business is done for! [*aloud*] Didn't I see you come out-doors wearing the mantle?

MEN. S. Curse you! Do you think all of us follow the women, just because you do? You declare that I was wearing the mantle?

PEN. Gad, yes, of course.

MEN. S. Go to—where you belong, will you! Or else get yourself purified, you utter idiot!

PEN. [*incensed*] By the Lord, no one shall ever induce me not to tell your wife everything, just as it happened! All this abuse of yours shall fall back on yourself; you shall suffer for devouring that lunch, I promise you.

[*Exit PENICULUS into house of MENAECHEMUS.*]

MEN. S. [*bewildered*] What does this mean? So everyone I set eyes on tries to make a fool of me, eh? [*listening*] But the door creaked!

SCENE III.

[*Enter Maid from EROTIIUM's house.*]

MAID. Menaechmus, Erotium says she would very much like you to take this bracelet [*showing it*] to the jeweller's at the same time and add an ounce of gold to it and have it made over new.

MEN. S. [*taking it with alacrity*] Tell her I'll take care of that and whatever else she wants taken care of—anything she likes.

MAID. Do you know what bracelet this is?

MEN. S. No, only that it's gold.

MAID. It's the one you said you stole long ago on the sly from your wife's chest.

MEN. S. Good Lord, I never did!

MAID. For heaven's sake, you don't remember? Give me back the bracelet, then, if you don't remember.

MEN. S. [*thinking hard*] Wait! Yes, yes, I do remember, to be sure! Of course, this is the one I gave her.

MAID. The very one.

MEN. S. [*interestedly*] Where are those armlets I gave her along with it?

MAID. You never gave her any.

MEN. S. That's right, by gad; this was all I gave her.

MAID. Shall I say you'll take care of it?

MEN. S. [*hiding a smile*] Do. It shall be taken care of. I'll see she gets the bracelet back at the same time she gets the mantle.

MAID. [*coaxingly*] Menaechmus dear, do have some earrings made for me—there's a nice man!—the pendant kind, with four shillings' worth of gold in them, so that I'll be glad to see you when you visit us.

MEN. S. [*heartily*] Surely. Give me the gold; I'll pay for the making, myself.

MAID. You furnish the gold, please do; I'll pay you back later.

MEN. S. No, no, you give me the gold; I'll pay you back later, twice over.

MAID. I haven't it.

MEN. S. Well, you give it to me when you do have it.

MAID. [*turning to go*] Is there anything else, sir?

MEN. S. Say I'll take care of these things—[*aside, as maid leaves*] take care they're sold as soon as possible for what they'll bring. [*Exit MAID.*]

[*Looking after her*] Gone now, has she? Gone! She's shut the door. [*joyful*] Well, well, all the gods do aid, augment, and love me! But I must hurry up and leave these harlot haunts while time and circumstance permit. Quick, Menaechmus! forward, march! I'll take off this garland and throw it away to the left [*does so*] so that if anyone follows me, they may think I have gone this way. [*going in the opposite direction*] I'll go meet my servant, if I can, and let him know how bountiful the gods have been to me. [*Exit.*]

ACT IV

SCENE I.

[*Enter MENAECHEMUS's wife from the house, followed by PENICULUS.*]

WIFE. [*tempestuous*] Shall I let myself be made a fool of in such a married life as this, where my husband slyly sneaks off with everything in the house and carries it to his mistress?

PEN. Hush, hush, won't you? You shall catch him in the act now, I war-

rant you. Just you follow me this way. Drunk and garlanded, he was carrying to the embroiderer's the mantle he stole from you and carried from the house to-day. [*seeing the garland*] But look here! Here is the garland he had! Now am I a liar? There! he went this way, if you want to track him. [*looking down the street*] Yes, and by Jove, look! Splendid! He is coming back! But without the mantle!

WIFE. How shall I act toward him now?

PEN. [*dryly*] The same as always—make him miserable; that is my advice. Let's step aside here; [*drawing her back between the houses*] catch him from ambush.

SCENE II.

[*Enter MENAECHMUS in a bad temper.*]

MEN. What slaves we are to this consummately crazy, confoundedly chafing custom! Yes, and it's the very best men amongst us that are its worst slaves. A long train of clients—that's what they all want; whether good men or bad is immaterial; it's the wealth of the clients they consider, rather than their reputation for probity. If a man's poor and not a bad sort, he's held to be worthless; but if he's rich and is a bad sort, he's held to be an admirable client. But clients that have absolutely no regard for law, or for what is just and fair, do keep their patrons worried. They deny honest debts, are for ever at law, they're rapacious, fraudulent fellows whose money was made by usury or perjury and whose souls are centred in their lawsuits. When the day of trial is set for them, it's set for [*with increased bitterness*] their patrons, too. Up comes the case before the people, or the court, or the aedile. That's the way a certain client of mine has kept me confoundedly worried to-day, and I haven't been able to do what I wanted or have the company I wanted, he has so delayed and detained me. Before the aediles I spoke in defence of his count-

less atrocities, and proposed provisos^o that were intricate and difficult; I had put the case more or less as was necessary to have a settlement made. But what did he do? [*hotly*] What? Named a surety! And never have I seen any man more manifestly caught; every one of his crimes was sworn to by three witnesses of the stoutest sort. [*pausing*] Heaven curse the man, with the way he's spoiled this day for me; yes, and curse me, too, for ever taking a look at the forum to-day! Such a splendid day as I have spoiled! A luncheon ordered, and a mistress no doubt waiting for me! At the earliest possible moment I hurried away from the forum. She's angry with me now, I suppose; [*hopefully*] my gift will mollify her—that mantle I took from my wife and brought to Erotium here.

PEN. [*triumphantly to wife, aside*] What do you say?

WIFE. [*indignant*] That he's a wretch who has me for his wretched wife!

PEN. You quite hear what he says?

WIFE. Quite.

MEN. If I had any sense, I should move on and go inside where I'll have a good time. [*passes his own house and goes towards EROTIIUM'S door*]

PEN. [*stepping forward*] You wait! It will be a bad time, instead.

WIFE. [*stepping forward on the other side*] You shall certainly pay interest on that theft, I swear you shall!

PEN. [*gleefully*] Take that!

WIFE. Did you think you could commit such outrages on the sly?

MEN. [*guileless*] What do you mean by that, my dear?

WIFE. You ask me?

MEN. Do you want me to ask him? [*pointing to PENICULUS*]

WIFE. [*as he tries to fondle her*] None of your caresses!

^oThe *sponsio* (settlement) was a kind of legal wager, each party putting up a sum of money which belonged to the party who succeeded in establishing his *condicio* (proviso). The winner of the *sponsio* also won the whole case. Menaechmus's client foolishly insisted upon a regular legal course and therefore *praedem dedit* (named a bondsman).

PEN. [*to wife*] Keep at him, keep at him!

MEN. Why are you cross at me?

WIFE. You ought to know!

PEN. He does know, but he's pretending, the rascal.

MEN. What does this mean?

WIFE. A mantle——

MEN. [*worried*] A mantle?

WIFE. A mantle someone——

PEN. [*to MENAECHEMUS*] What are you frightened at?

MEN. [*trying to appear unconcerned*] Frightened? I? Not in the least.

PEN. [*triumphantly, pointing to MENAECHEMUS's face, which has turned pale*] Barring this: the mantle unmans you. Now none of your eating up the lunch behind my back! [*to WIFE*] Keep at the fellow!

MEN. [*aside to PENICULUS*] Keep still, won't you? [*shakes his head at him.*]

PEN. [*loudly*] Indeed I will not keep still, by Jove! [*to WIFE*] He's shaking his head at me not to speak.

MEN. Not I, not a bit of it, by Jove! I'm not shaking my head at all, or winking at you, either.

PEN. Well, of all the cheek! To deny flatly what you see with your own eyes!

MEN. My dear, I swear by Heaven and all that's holy—is that strong enough for you?—I did not shake my head at him.

PEN. Oh, she takes your word for that forthwith! Get back to the point.

MEN. Back to what point?

PEN. Why, to the embroiderer's shop, I should say. Go, bring back the mantle.

MEN. Mantle? What mantle?

PEN. [*disgusted at WIFE's tearful futility*] I say no more, seeing she doesn't remember her own affairs.

WIFE. [*in tears*] Oh Heavens! I surely am an unhappy woman!

MEN. [*solicitously*] How are you unhappy? Tell me all about it. [*to WIFE, tenderly*] Has any one of the slaves been at fault? Do the maids or men-servants talk back to you? Do speak out. They shall pay for it.

WIFE. Nonsense!

MEN. You're awfully cross. I don't quite like that.

WIFE. Nonsense!

MEN. It must be some one of the servants you're angry with.

WIFE. Nonsense!

MEN. You're not angry at me, anyhow, are you?

WIFE. There now! That's sense.

MEN. Good Lord! I haven't been at fault!

WIFE. Aha! back to your nonsense!

MEN. [*patting her*] Do tell me what troubles you, my dear.

PEN. [*scornfully*] He's soft-soaping you, the sweet thing!

MEN. [*to PENICULUS*] Can't you stop annoying me? I'm not addressing you, am I? [*tries to caress his wife*]

WIFE. Take your hand away! [*slaps him*]

PEN. Take that! Now be in a hurry to eat up the lunch in my absence, now get drunk and appear in front of the house with a garland on and give me the laugh!

MEN. Good heavens! I haven't eaten lunch, and I've never set foot inside this house to-day.

PEN. You deny it?

MEN. Indeed I do, gad, yes.

PEN. Well, of all the brazenness! Didn't I just now see you in front of the house here wearing a garland of flowers? When you told me that my headpiece was out of order and that you didn't know me, and said you were arriving from abroad?

MEN. Why, I'm only this moment getting home after parting company with you a while ago.

PEN. [*angrily*] I know you! You didn't count on my having a way to get even with you. By gad, I've told your wife everything!

MEN. What have you told her?

PEN. Oh, I don't know; ask her yourself.

MEN. [*to his wife, bravely*] What's all this, my dear? What sort of a tale has he been relating to you? What is it? Why are you silent? Why don't you tell me what it is?

WIFE. As if you didn't know! Asking me!

MEN. Bless my soul! I shouldn't ask you if I did know.

PEN. Oh the villain! How he plays the innocent! [to MENAECHMUS] You can't conceal it; she understands the matter beautifully. I have told her the whole story, by Jove!

MEN. What does this mean?

WIFE. [with acerbity] Since you have no sense of shame and no wish to confess of your own free will, listen, and listen closely. I'll soon let you know why I'm cross and what he told me. A mantle has been stolen from me at home.

MEN. [indignant] A mantle stolen from me?

PEN. See how the rascal is trying to catch you? [to MENAECHMUS] It was stolen from her, not from you. Why, if it was stolen from you, it would certainly be—lost.⁷

MEN. [to PENICULUS] I have nothing to do with you. [to WIFE] But you, what are you saying?

WIFE. A mantle, I tell you, has disappeared from the house.

MEN. Who stole it?

WIFE. Goodness me! The man who took it knows that.

MEN. Who is this man?

WIFE. A certain Menaechmus.

MEN. It's a scurvy trick, by Jove! Who is this Menaechmus?

WIFE. You yourself, I tell you.

MEN. I?

WIFE. You.

MEN. Who's my accuser?

WIFE. I am.

PEN. Yes, and I. And you took it to your mistress Erotium here, too.

MEN. I gave it away—I?

WIFE. You, you yourself, I tell you.

PEN. D'ye want us to bring on an owl, to keep saying "yoo, yoo" to you? For we've got tired of saying it by now.⁸

⁷and not safe at the embroiderer's.

⁸vv. 655-656:

MEN. My dear, I swear by Heaven and all that's holy—is that strong enough for you? —I did not give it away.

WIFE. Goodness me, no, that we are not tying.

MEN. [weakly] But I didn't give it to her out and out; I only—it's like this—I only lent it.

WIFE. Good gracious, sir! I certainly do not lend out your mantle or cloak to anyone. A woman is the proper person to give out women's clothes, a man men's. You bring that mantle back home, will you?

MEN. I'll see it's brought back.

WIFE. You will be seeing to your own comfort, I fancy; for never shall you enter the house unless you bring the mantle with you. [turning away abruptly] I am going home.

PEN. [anxiously] What do I get for helping you in this?

WIFE. [with a sour smile] I'll help you in return when something is stolen from your house.

[Exit into the house.]

PEN. Oh Lord! That means never, for I have nothing in my house to lose. [heartily] Be damned to you, husband and wife both! I'll hurry to the forum, for I perceive I've plainly fallen out of the good graces of this family. [Exit.]

MEN. [comfortably] My wife thinks she has pained me by shutting me out. Just as if there wasn't another place—and a better one—where I'll be admitted. If you don't like me, I must bear it; Erotium here will like me anyway. She won't shut me out; oh no, she'll shut me in with her! Now I'll go and beg her to give me back the mantle I gave her a while ago; I'll buy her another, a better one. [knocking at her door] Hullo! Anyone minding the door here? Open up and call Erotium out, someone!

SCENE III.

EROT. [within] Who is inquiring for me?

MEN. A man who is more his own foe than yours, dear.

[Enter EROTIVM into the doorway.]

EROT. Menaechmus, love, why are you standing out here? [taking his arm] Do come in.

MEN. Wait. Do you know why I've come to see you?

EROT. I know—so that we may have a nice time together.

MEN. No, you're wrong, confound it! Do give me back that mantle I gave you a while ago, there's a dear. My wife has found out about the whole business, from beginning to end. I'll buy you a mantle twice as expensive—any you choose.

EROT. [*surprised*] But I gave it to you to take to the embroiderer's just a few minutes ago, along with that bracelet you were to carry to the jeweller's to have made over.

MEN. You gave me the mantle and a bracelet—me? You'll find you never did so. Why, after giving you that mantle a while ago and going to the forum I'm just getting back; this is the first time I've seen you since then.

EROT. [*aroused*] But I see what you are up to. Just because I've put them into your hands you're attempting to do this, to cheat me.

MEN. No, heavens, no! it's not to cheat you I ask for it—really, my wife has found out, I tell you—

EROT. [*passing over what she thinks the usual lie*] No, and I didn't beg you to give it to me in the first place; you brought it to me yourself of your own accord, made me a present of it; and now you ask it back. Very well. Take it, carry it off, wear it yourself or let your wife wear it, or for that matter lock it up in a coffer. You shall not set foot in this house after to-day, don't fool yourself. Now that you've held a good friend like me in contempt, you can bring along ready money, or else you can't lead me along like a fool. After this you just find somebody else to fool. [*turns to go in.*]

MEN. Oh gad, now, really you're too testy! Here, here! I say! Wait! Come back! What? you won't stop? What? you aren't willing to return for my sake?

[*Exit EROTUM, slamming the door.*]

She's gone inside! She's closed the door! Well, if I'm not getting the most exclusive reception! Neither at home

nor at my mistress's, either, do they believe a word I say! I'll go and consult my friends about this and see what they think should be done. [*Exit.*]

ACT V

SCENE I.

[*Enter MENAECHEMUS SOSICLES.*]

MEN. S. What an idiot I was a while ago when I entrusted my wallet and money to Messenio! He's immersed himself in a pothouse somewhere, I suppose.

[*Enter the WIFE of MENAECHEMUS into the doorway.*]

WIFE. I'll go out and see if my husband won't soon be back home. [*seeing MENAECHEMUS SOSICLES*] Oh, why, there he is! I'm saved! He is bringing back the mantle.

MEN. S. I wonder where Messenio is promenading now.

WIFE. I'll step up and welcome him with the words he deserves. [*advancing*] Aren't you ashamed to appear in my sight with that costume, you monster?

MEN. S. [*startled*] Eh, what is it that excites you, madam?

WIFE. What! Do you dare breathe a word, do you dare speak to me, you shameless creature?

MEN. S. What, pray, is my offence, that I should not dare to speak?

WIFE. You ask me? Oh, such brazen shamelessness!

MEN. S. [*still polite*] Madam, do you not know why the ancient Greeks used to declare that Hecuba was a bitch?

WIFE. [*sharply*] No, indeed I don't.

MEN. S. Because Hecuba used to do precisely what you are doing now: she used to pour every kind of abuse on everyone she saw. So they began to call her bitch, and quite properly, too.

WIFE. [*incensed*] I cannot endure this outrageous conduct of yours. Why, I'd rather live without a husband all my life than put up with the outrageous things you do.

MEN. S. And how does it concern me whether you can endure your married life, or leave your husband? Or is this the fashion here—to prattle to arriving strangers?

WIFE. Prattle? I will not put up with it any longer, I tell you. I'll get a divorce rather than tolerate your goings-on.

MEN. S. Lord, Lord! get divorced, for all I care—and stay so as long as Jove reigns!

WIFE. [*examining mantle*] See here, you denied stealing this a while ago, and now you hold it, the very same one, right before my eyes. Aren't you ashamed?

MEN. S. Bravo, madam! By Jove! You are a bold, bad one with a vengeance! Do you dare tell me this was stolen from you, when another woman gave it to me so that I might get it renovated?

WIFE. Good heavens, that is—I'll send for my father this moment and I'll give him an account of your outrageous actions! [*calling at door*] Deceo! Go look for my father—bring him here to me; say it's absolutely necessary. [*to MENAECHMUS SOSCILES*] I'll soon lay bare your outrageous conduct!

MEN. S. Are you sane? What is this outrageous conduct of mine?

WIFE. You filched my mantle and jewellery from the house—from your own wife—and carried them off to your mistress. Isn't this perfectly true [*bitterly*] prattle?

MEN. S. Good Lord, madam, if you know of any drug I can take to enable me to endure that temper of yours, for heaven's sake name it. Who you think I am is a mystery to me; as for me, I knew you when I knew Hercules' wife's grandfather.⁹

WIFE. You may laugh at me, but I vow you can't laugh at that man, [*pointing down the street*] my father, who's coming this way. Look back there. Do you know him?

MEN. S. [*looking*] Oh yes, I knew

⁹ Porthaon, father of Oeneus, father of Deianeira, last wife of Hercules.

him when I knew Calchas.¹⁰ I saw him on the same day I first saw you.

WIFE. You deny knowing me, you deny knowing my father?

MEN. S. Oh Lord! I'll say the same thing if you bring on your grandfather. [*walks away*]

WIFE. 'Oh dear me! that's just the way you are always acting!

SCENE II.

[*Enter MENAECHMUS'S FATHER-IN-LAW slowly and laboriously.*]

FATHER [*sighing wearily*] Yes, I'll step out, I'll step along as . . . fast as my age permits and the occasion demands. [*halting*] But I know well enough how . . . easy it is for me. For I've lost my nimbleness . . . the years have taken hold of me . . . it's a heavy body I carry . . . my strength has left me. Ah, old age is a bad thing—a bad piece of freight! Yes, yes, it brings along untold tribulations when it comes; if I were to specify them all, it would be a . . . long, long story. But this is the thing that weighs on my mind and heart—what in the world has happened to make my daughter ask me, all of a sudden this way, to come to her. Not a word am I told as to what is wrong, what she wants, why she summons me. However, I have a pretty fair notion already what it's all about. She's had some squabble with her husband, I fancy. That's the way with women that try to keep their husbands under their thumbs, arrogant just because they've brought a good dowry. [*pauses*] And the husbands often aren't blameless, either. [*reflecting*] However, there's a limit, just the same, to what a wife should put up with; and, by Jove, a daughter never summons her father unless there's something amiss or some just cause for complaint. But I shall soon know about it, whatever it is. [*advancing and looking about*] Ah, there she is herself in front of the house—and her husband, looking sour! It's just as I suspected. I'll have a word with her.

¹⁰ a seer at the siege of Troy.

WIFE. [*aside*] I'll go meet him. [*advancing*] I hope you're well, father dear—very well.

FATHER. And you. Do I find all well here? Is all well, that you have me summoned? Why are you so gloomy? Yes, and why is he? [*pointing to MENAECHEMUS SOSICLES*] standing aloof there, angry? You've been bickering over something or other, you two. Out with it—which is to blame? Be brief; no long words.

WIFE. I haven't been at fault at all, indeed I haven't; I'll relieve you on this point first, father. But I can't live here, I simply cannot stand it. So you must take me away from this house.

FATHER. [*peevishly*] But what is the trouble?

WIFE. I'm made a laughing-stock, father!

FATHER. By whom?

WIFE. By the man you entrusted me to, my husband.

FATHER. Now look at that! A squabble! See here, how many times have I given you notice to guard against coming to me with grievances, either of you?

WIFE. [*tearfully*] How can I guard against that, my father dear?

FATHER. [*severely*] You ask me?

WIFE. If you please.

FATHER. How many times have I explicitly told you to humour your husband and not keep watching what he does, where he goes, and what he is about?

WIFE. Well, but he makes love to this strumpet, the very next door!

FATHER. He shows excellent judgment, and he will make love to her all the more, I warrant you, to reward this diligence of yours.

WIFE. And he drinks there, too.

FATHER. Just because of you, will he drink the less there or anywhere else he pleases? Such confounded impudence! You might as well expect to keep him from accepting an invitation to dinner, or from having company at his own home. Do you expect your husbands to be your slaves? You might as well expect to give him housework

to do, and bid him sit with the maids and card wool.

WIFE. [*resentfully*] I see I have brought you here, father, to defend my husband, not myself. Retained by me, you plead his case.

FATHER. If he has done anything out of the way, I shall be a great deal more severe with him than I have been with you. But inasmuch as he keeps you well supplied with jewellery and clothes, furnishes you with plenty of maidservants and provisions, you had better be sensible about things, my girl.

WIFE. But he filches my jewellery and mantles from my chests at home, he robs me, and carries my nicest things to strumpets on the sly!

FATHER. He does wrong, if he does that; if he doesn't, you are doing wrong to accuse an innocent man.

WIFE. Why, he has a mantle this very moment, father, and a bracelet he'd taken to her he is just now bringing back, because I found him out.

FATHER. I'll find out about this from him at once. I'll go and have a talk with the man. [*approaching MENAECHEMUS SOSICLES*] Speak up, Menaechmus, and let me know what you two are at odds over. Why are you so gloomy? And why is she standing aloof there, angry?

MEN. S. [*vehemently*] Whoever you are, whatever your name is, old gentleman, I call Heaven and God on high to witness—

FATHER. [*surprised*] What about, concerning what conceivable thing?

MEN. S. That I have done no wrong to that woman who accuses me of having raided her house and stolen this mantle, and of having carried it off—

WIFE. He swears to that?

MEN. S. If I ever set foot inside this house, where she lives, I pray Heaven to make me the most wretched wretch on earth.

FATHER. [*horrified*] Are you sane, to pray for a thing like that, or to deny that you ever put foot in this house, where you live, you utter idiot?

MEN. S. Do you, too, say I live in that house, old gentleman?

FATHER. And do you deny it?

MEN. S. By gad I do, truly!

FATHER. No, by gad, you do untruly—unless you moved away somewhere last night. [*turning to his wife*] Daughter, come over here. [*she obeys*] Tell me—you have not moved away from here, have you?

WIFE. Where to, or why, for mercy's sake?

FATHER. Bless my soul, I don't know.

WIFE. He's making fun of you, of course. Can't you see that?

FATHER. Really now, Menaechmus, you have joked enough. Come now, stick to the point!

MEN. S. See here, what have I got to do with you? Who are you, and where do you come from? What do I owe you, or that woman either, who is pestering me in every conceivable way?

WIFE. [*to her father, frightened*] Do you see how green his eyes are? And that greenish colour coming over his temples and forehead? How his eyes glitter! look!

MEN. S. [*aside*] Seeing they declare I'm insane, what's better for me than to pretend I am insane, so as to frighten them off? [*develops alarming symptoms.*]

WIFE. [*more frightened*] How he stretches and gapes! Father, father dear, what shall I do now?

FATHER. [*retreating*] Come over here, my child, as far as you can from him!

MEN. S. [*having worked himself up properly*] Euhoe! Bacchus! Bromius! Whither dost thou summon me a-hunting in the woods? I hear, but I cannot quit these regions, with that rabid bitch on watch there at my left, aye, and there behind a bald-headed goat who many a time in his life has ruined a guiltless fellow-citizen by his perjury!

FATHER. [*in helpless rage*] Ugh! Curse you!

MEN. S. Lo! Apollo from his oracle doth bid me burn her eyes out with blazing brands!

WIFE. He'll murder me, father dear! he threatens to burn my eyes out!

FATHER [*in low tone*] Hey! daughter!

WIFE. What is it? What shall we do?

FATHER. How about my calling the servants here? I'll go and fetch some to carry him away from here and tie him up at home before he makes any more trouble.

MEN. S. [*aside*] Now then, I'm stuck! Unless I get the start of them with some scheme, they'll be taking me off to their house. [*intercepting the old man and glaring at Wife*] Thou dost bid me, Apollo, to spare my fists in no wise upon her face, unless she doth leave my sight and—get to the devil out of here! I will do as thou biddest, Apollo! [*advancing upon her.*]

FATHER. Run, run home as fast as you can before he batters you to bits!

WIFE. [*rushing for the door*] Yes, I'm running. Do, please, keep watch of him, father dear, and don't let him leave this place! Oh, miserable woman that I am, to have to hear such words! [*Exit.*]

MEN. S. Not badly, oh Apollo, did I remove that female! Now for this beastly, bewhiskered, doddering Tithonus, who calls himself the son of Cygnus¹¹—these be thy commands, that I crush his limbs and bones and joints with that same staff which he doth carry! [*advances*]

FATHER. [*retreating and raising his staff*] You'll get hurt if you touch me, I tell you, or if you come any nearer to me!

MEN. S. I will do as thou biddest! I will take a double-edged axe, and this old man—I'll hew away his flesh, gobbet by gobbet, to the very bone!

FATHER. [*aside, timorously, still retreating*] I must be on my guard and look out for myself, indeed I must! Really, I'm afraid he'll do me some injury, from the way he threatens me.

MEN. S. Many are thy commands, Apollo. Now thou dost bid me take yokell steeds, unbroken, fiery, and

¹¹ A mistake, probably intentional. Tithonus was the son of Laomedon.

mount a chariot that I may dash to earth this aged, stinking, toothless lion. [*mounts his chariot*] Now am I in my car! Now do I hold the reins! Now have I goad in hand! On, steeds, on! Let the ring of your hoof-beats be heard! Let your fleetness of foot rush you rapidly on! [*gallops about*]

FATHER. [*clutching his staff*] You threaten me with yokéd steeds—me?

MEN. S. Lo, Apollo! Anew thou biddest me charge upon this man who stands here and lay him low! [*charges; the old man raises his staff; the charioteer stops short*] But who is this who by the hair doth tear me from the car? He revokes thy command and the edict of Apollo! [*falls to the ground, apparently senseless*]

FATHER. Well! Good heavens, what an acute, severe attack! Lord save us! Now this man who's gone insane—how healthy he was a little while ago! For him to have such an attack so suddenly! I'll go and summon a doctor as soon as I possibly can. [*Exit.*]

SCENE III.

MEN. S. [*getting up and looking about*] For Heaven's sake, are they out of my sight now, those two that absolutely compelled me, sound though I am, to go insane? I'd better hurry off to the ship while I can do so safely. [*to audience*] I beg you, all of you, if the old man comes back, don't tell him which way I bolted. [*Exit.*]

[*Enter FATHER-IN-LAW.*]

FATHER. My loins ache from sitting and my eyes from watching, while I waited for the doctor to come back from his calls. Finally he did manage to get away from his patients, the bore! He says he set a broken leg for Aesculapius, and put Apollo's arm in a splint, besides! So now I am wondering whether to say I'm bringing a saw-bones or a stonecutter. [*glancing down the street*] Just look at him mince along! [*calling*] Quickened that ant's pace of yours!

SCENE IV.

[*Enter a DOCTOR.*]

DOCTOR. [*ponderously*] What was the nature of his attack, did you say? State the symptoms, old gentleman. Is it a demoniacal visitation or paranoia? Inform me. Does he suffer from a lethargical habit or intercutaneous fluid?

FATHER. [*sharply*] Why, I brought you just to tell me that and cure him.

DOCTOR. [*lightly*] Oh, that is easy, quite easy. He shall be cured—I promise you that upon my honour.

FATHER. [*distrustfully*] I want him to be cared for very carefully indeed.

DOCTOR. [*reassuringly waggish*] Why, I will sigh more than six hundred times a day; that shows how I will care for him very carefully indeed for you.

FATHER. [*looking down street*] Ah, there is our man himself! Let's watch what he does. [*they step back*]

SCENE V.

[*Enter MENAECHEMUS.*]

MEN. Good Lord! This has certainly proved a perverse and adverse day for me! Everything I thought I was doing on the sly has got out, thanks to that parasite who's overwhelmed me with infamy and fear—that Ulysses of mine who's brewed such a mess for his lord and master! Sure as I'm alive, I'll shuffle off that fellow's mortal coil! His? I'm a fool to call it his, when it's mine; it's my food and my money he's been reared on. I'll cut that worthy off from the breath of life! But as for the harlot, she was true to style, did only what her class always do! Because I ask her to let me carry the mantle back to my wife again, she says she has given it to me. Well! By Jove, I certainly do lead a miserable life!

FATHER. [*to DOCTOR*] Do you catch what he says?

DOCTOR. He declares that he is miserable.

FATHER. I should like you to go up to him.

DOCTOR. [*advancing*] Good day, Menaechmus. But, my dear man, why do you expose your arm? Are you not aware how injurious that is to one suffering from your present complaint?

MEN. [*violently*] You be hanged! [*the DOCTOR jumps*]

FATHER. [*aside to DOCTOR*] Do you notice anything?

DOCTOR. I should say I do. This case is beyond the powers of a wagon-load of hellebore. But see here, Menaechmus.

MEN. What d'ye want?

DOCTOR. Answer me this question: do you drink white or red wine?

MEN. Oh, go to the devil!

DOCTOR. [*to FATHER*] Ah yes, now he begins to manifest the first symptoms of insanity.

MEN. Why don't you inquire whether the bread I generally eat is blood red, rose red, or saffron yellow? Whether I generally eat birds with scales, fish with feathers?

FATHER. [*to DOCTOR*] Dear, dear! Do you hear how wildly he talks? Why don't you hurry up and give him a dose of something before he goes insane entirely?

DOCTOR. [*to FATHER*] Now, now, one moment! I will question him still further.

FATHER. You're killing me with your talk!

DOCTOR. [*to patient*] Tell me this: do you ever experience a sensation of hardness in the eyes?

MEN. What? You good-for-nothing, do you take me for a lobster?

DOCTOR. Tell me: do you ever have a rumbling of the bowels, so far as you observe?

MEN. Not after I've had a square meal; when I'm hungry, then there's a rumbling.

DOCTOR. [*to FATHER*] Well, well! There's no indication of insanity in that reply. [*to MENAECHMUS*] Do you sleep entirely through the night? Do you fall asleep readily on retiring?

MEN. I sleep through if I've paid

my bills—[*angrily*] may all the powers above consume you, you inquisitive ass!

DOCTOR. [*backing away*] Now the man does begin to manifest insanity! You hear him—look out for yourself!

FATHER. Oh no, to hear him now you'd think him a perfect Nestor¹² compared with what he was a while ago. Why, a while ago he called his wife a rabid bitch.

MEN. Eh? I?

FATHER. Yes, while you were raving.

MEN. I?

FATHER. Yes, you, and you kept threatening me, too—that you would dash me to the earth with a yoked four-in-hand. I myself saw you do all this. I myself accuse you of it.

MEN. [*incensed*] Yes, and you stole the sacred crown from Jupiter's statue, I know that; and you were put in prison for it, I know that; and after getting out, you were put in the stocks and whipped, I know that; and then you murdered your father and sold your mother, that's something more I know. Do I pay you back your abuse well enough for a sane man, eh?

FATHER. For God's sake, doctor, whatever you're going to do, hurry up and do it! Don't you see the man is insane?

DOCTOR. [*aside to FATHER*] Do you know what you had best do? Have him conveyed to my house.

FATHER. You advise that?

DOCTOR. By all means. There I shall be able to care for him as I deem expedient.

FATHER. Do as you please.

DOCTOR. [*to MENAECHMUS*] You shall drink hellebore, I promise you, for some twenty days.

MEN. But I'll string you up and jab goads into you for thirty days.

DOCTOR. [*aside to FATHER*] Go, summon men to convey him to my house.

FATHER. How many are needed?

DOCTOR. Considering the degree of insanity I note, four, no less.

FATHER. They shall be here soon. Keep watch of him, doctor.

¹²the counsellor of the Greeks at Troy.

DOCTOR. [*clearly reluctant*] No, no! I shall go home so as to make the necessary preparations. You order the servants to bring him to my house.

FATHER. He'll be there soon, I promise you.

DOCTOR. I am going.

FATHER. Good-bye. [*Exeunt.*]

MEN. [*looking after them*] Father-in-law's gone. Doctor's gone. All alone! Lord save us! What is it makes those men declare I'm insane? Why, as a matter of fact, I've never had a sick day since I was born. I'm neither insane, nor looking for fights, nor starting disputes, not I. I'm perfectly sound and regard others as sound; I recognize people, talk to them. Can it be they're insane themselves with their absurd statements that I'm insane? [*pauses*] What shall I do now? I long to go home, but my wife won't let me. And as for this place, [*glaring at EROTIVM'S house*] no one will let me in. Oh what damnable luck! [*pauses*] Here's where I'll stay, indefinitely; I fancy I'll be let into the house at nightfall, anyhow.

SCENE VI.

[*Enter MESSENIOR.*]

MES. [*self-righteous and smug*] This is your proof of a good servant who looks after his master's business, sees to it, gives it his care and consideration—when he watches over his master's business in his master's absence just as diligently as if he was present, or even more so. The chap that's got his wits in the proper place ought to think more of his back than his gullet, more of his shanks than his belly. He'd better recollect how good-for-nothings, lazy, rascally fellows, are rewarded by their masters: whippings, shackles, work in the mill, fag, famine, freezing stiff—these are the rewards of laziness. I'm badly afraid of such bad things, personally; that's why I've made up my mind to lead a good life rather than a bad one. I can stand chiding a great deal more easily—but a hiding

I can't abide, myself, and I'd very much rather eat the meal than turn the mill. That's why I follow out master's orders, attend to 'em properly and sedately; yes, indeed, I find it pays. Others can act as they think good for 'em; I'm going to be the sort of chap I should be—I must have a sense of fear, I must keep straight, so as to be on hand for master anywhere.¹³ I shan't have much to fear. The day's near when master will reward me for my service. I do my work on the principle that I think is good for my back. Here I come to meet master just as he told me, now that I've left the luggage and slaves at an inn. Now I'll knock at the door, so as to let him know I'm here, and lead him safely out of this ravine of ruination. But I'm afraid I'll be too late and find the battle over. [*goes to EROTIVM'S doorway*]

SCENE VII.

[*Enter FATHER-IN-LAW with Slaves.*]

FATHER. [*to Slaves, sternly*] By heaven and earth, I charge you to be wise and heed my orders, past and present. Pick up that man [*indicating MENAECHEMUS*] and carry him at once to the doctor's office—that is, unless you have no regard at all for your legs or flanks. See that none of you cares a straw for his threats. Why are you standing still? Why are you hesitating? He ought to have been hoisted up and carried off already. I'll go to the doctor's; I'll be at hand there when you arrive. [*Exit.*]

MEN. [*as the Slaves dash at him*] Murder! What does this mean? What are those fellows rushing at me for, in the name of Heaven? What do you want? What are you after? What are you surrounding me for? Where are you pulling me? Where are you carrying me? [*struggling on their shoulders*]

¹³ vv. 983A-983B: Servants that are afraid even when they're blameless, they're the ones that are always of some use to their masters. And I tell you, the ones that aren't afraid at all are afraid all right after they've earned a thrashing.

ders] Murder! Help, help, Epidamnians, I beg you! Save me, fellow-citizens! Let me go, I tell you!

MES. Ye immortal gods! In Heaven's name, what is this my eyes behold? My master being carried off by some gang of rowdies in most outrageous fashion!

MEN. Doesn't anyone dare come to my rescue?

MES. [*running up*] I do, master,—like a regular daredevil! [*yelling lustily*] Oh, what an outrage, what a shame, Epidamnians! My master, a free-born visitor amongst you, to be abducted here in time of peace, in broad daylight, in your city streets! Let go of him!

MEN. For Heaven's sake, whoever you are, stand by me and don't let me be maltreated in such atrocious fashion!

MES. Not I! Stand by you I will, and defend you and help you with all my heart! I won't let you be murdered, never! Better myself than you! For Heaven's sake, master, pull out the eye of that chap that has you by the shoulder! [*swinging vigorously at the nearest Slaves*] As for these fellows here, I'm going to seed down their faces for them directly and plant my fists. By gad, you'll pay dear this day for carrying him off! Let go!

MEN. I've got this one by the eye!

MES. Leave the socket showing in his head! [*warming up to his work*] You rascals! You robbers! You bandits!

SLAVES. Murder! Oh, for God's sake, let up!

MES. Let go, then! [*they drop MENAECHEMUS*]

MEN. [*assisting MESSenio*] What do you mean by touching me? [*to MESSenio*] Comb them down with your fists! [*Slaves scatter*]

MES. Come, clear out! Get to the devil out of here! [*with a parting kick to a laggard*] There's another for you—take it as a prize for being the last to leave! [*Exeunt SLAVES.*]

[*Smirking*] Oh, I measured their faces in fine style and quite to my taste. By Jove, master, I certainly did

come to your aid in the nick of time just now!

MEN. Well, Heaven bless you for ever and ever, young man, whoever you are. For if it hadn't been for you, I should never have lived to see the sun go down this day.

MES. Then, by Jove, master, if you did the right thing you'd set me free.

MEN. I set you free?

MES. Yes indeed, seeing I saved your life, master.

MEN. What's this? You're making a mistake, young man.

MES. Eh? A mistake?

MEN. Why, I swear by Father Jupiter I'm not your master.

MES. [*protestingly*] Oh, none of that, sir!

MEN. I'm not lying; no slave of mine ever did such a thing as you did for me.

MES. Very well then, sir, if you say I'm not yours, let me go free.

MEN. Lord, man, be free so far as I am concerned, and go where you like.

MES. [*eagerly*] Those are your orders, really?

MEN. Lord, yes, if I have any authority over you.

MES. [*wild with joy*] Hail, patron mine! "Messenio, I congratulate you on your freedom!" By gad, I take your word for it! But, patron, I beseech you, don't order me about any less than when I was your slave. I intend to live with you, and when you go home I'll go with you.

MEN. [*aside*] Oh no you won't.

MES. Now I'll go to the inn and fetch the luggage and cash for you. The wallet with the travelling money is duly under seal in the bag; I'll bring it here to you directly.

MEN. [*interested*] Be quick about it.

MES. I'll give it back to you intact, sir, just as you gave it to me. Wait for me here. [*Exit.*]

MEN. Well, well, how strangely strange things have happened to me to-day! Here are people saying I'm not myself and shutting me out of doors, and there's that fellow who just now

said he was going to fetch me some money and that he was my slave—that saviour of mine, whom I just now set free. He says he'll bring me a wallet with money in it; if he does, I'll tell him to leave me and enjoy his freedom wherever he likes, so that he won't be coming to me for his money when he regains his sanity. [*pauses*] My father-in-law and the doctor said I was insane. It's a marvel to me what all this means! It seems just like a dream. [*reflects*] Now I will go into this harlot's house, no matter if she is in a rage with me, and see if I can't induce her to give me back the mantle to carry back home.

[*Exit into EROTIVM's house.*]

SCENE VIII.

[*Enter MENAECHEMUS SOSICLES and MESSENIUS.*]

MEN. S. You cheeky rascal, you have the cheek to tell me you have encountered me anywhere to-day since the time I ordered you to come here and meet me?

MES. [*much aggrieved*] Why, sir, I just now rescued you when four men were carrying you off on their shoulders in front of this very house. You were yelling for all heaven and earth to help you, when up I ran and rescued you by good hard fighting, in spite of 'em. And for this, because I'd saved you, you've set me free. Then the moment I said I was going to get the money and luggage, you ran ahead as fast as you could to meet me, so as to deny what you had done!

MEN. S. So I ordered you to go free, eh?

MES. [*hopefully*] Certainly, sir.

MEN. S. [*emphatically*] Well, the most certain thing in the world is this—I had rather become a slave myself than ever free you.

SCENE IX.

[*Enter MENAECHEMUS from EROTIVM's house.*]

MEN. [*to those within*] Swear it by the eyes in your head if you like, but,

by the Lord, that won't make it any more true that I took off the mantle and bracelet to-day, you sluts!

MES. [*gazing at him*] Ye immortal gods, what do I see?

MEN. S. What do you see?

MES. Your mirror!

MEN. S. What do you mean?

MES. [*pointing to MENAECHEMUS*] He's the very image of you! He's as like you as can be!

MEN. S. [*comparing himself with the stranger*] By Jove! He certainly is not unlike me, now that I look myself over.

MEN. [*seeing MESSENIUS*] Ah there, sir, bless you—you that saved me, whoever you are!

MES. Sir, for the love of Heaven, do tell me your name, if you don't object.

MEN. Gad, man, your services to me haven't been such that I should grudge meeting your wishes. My name is Menaechmus.

MEN. S. [*startled*] Good Lord, no; it's mine!

MEN. I'm a Sicilian—a Syracusan.

MEN. S. That's my city and my country, too.

MEN. What's that you tell me?

MEN. S. The simple truth.

MES. [*half to himself, as he scans MENAECHEMUS*] This is the man I know, of course; this is my master. I'm really his slave, but I fancied [*glancing at MENAECHEMUS SOSICLES*] I was his. [*to MENAECHEMUS*] I thought he was you, sir, and what's more, I made myself a nuisance to him, too. [*to MENAECHEMUS SOSICLES*] I beg your pardon, sir, if I said anything silly to you without realising it.

MEN. S. [*sharply*] You talk like an idiot. Do you not remember coming ashore along with me to-day?

MES. [*hurriedly*] To be sure, you're right. It's you who are my master. [*to MENAECHEMUS*] You seek another slave. [*to MENAECHEMUS SOSICLES*] Good day to you, sir. [*to MENAECHEMUS*] Good-bye to you, sir. I say this gentleman [*indicating his master*] is Menaechmus.

MEN. But I say I am.

MEN. S. [*irritated*] What yarn is this? You are Menaechmus?

MEN. So I say—the son of Moschus.

MEN. S. You the son of my father?

MEN. No indeed, sir,—of my own; your father I have no desire to preempt or steal from you.

MES. [*aside, after apparently profound thought*] Ye immortal gods! fulfil the un hoped-for hope I think I see before me! Yes, unless my mind deceives me, these two are the twin brothers! Yes, what they say about their country and father tallies exactly. I'll call my master aside. Menaechmus, sir!

MEN. } What do you want?
MEN. S. }

MES. I don't want both of you, but the one that travelled on board ship with me.

MEN. I did not.

MEN. S. But I did.

MES. You're the one I want, then. [*withdrawing*] Come over here, sir.

MEN. S. [*doing so*] Here I am. What is it?

MES. [*very sagacious and important*] That man over there is either a swindler, sir, or else he's your own twin brother. For I never did see two men more alike. No drop of water, no drop of milk, is more like another, believe me, than he's like you, yes, and you like him, sir. And then he says his country and his father's name are the same as yours. We'd better go up and question him.

MEN. S. By Jove, you have given me good advice! Thanks! Go on helping me, for God's sake! You are a free man if you find that he is my brother.

MES. I hope so.

MEN. S. And I—I hope so, too!

MES. [*stepping up to MENAECHEMUS*] Pardon me, sir. You said your name was Menaechmus, I believe.

MEN. I did indeed.

MES. This [*pointing to MENAECHEMUS SOSCLES*] gentleman's name is Menaechmus, too. You said you were born in Syracuse in Sicily; he also was born there. You said your father's

name was Moschus; so was his. Now both of you can do me a good turn, and yourselves as well.

MEN. You have earned my consent to any request you choose to make. Free though I am, I'll serve you quite as if you had bought and paid for me.

MES. I have hopes, sir, of finding that you two are twin brothers, born of one mother and one father on one day.

MEN. A strange statement! I wish you could bring to pass what you promise.

MES. I can. [*tremendously earnest and subtle*] But come now, both of you, and answer my questions.

MEN. Ask them when you like; I'll answer. Nothing that I know will I keep back.

MES. Is your name Menaechmus?

MEN. It is.

MES. [*to his master*] And yours also?

MEN. S. Yes.

MES. [*to MENAECHEMUS*] Your father was Moschus, you say?

MEN. I do indeed.

MEN. S. And mine, too! [*MESSENIO scowls at him*]

MES. [*to MENAECHEMUS*] Are you a Syracusan?

MEN. Certainly.

MES. [*to his master*] How about you?

MEN. S. Of course I am.

MES. Everything tallies perfectly so far. Your attention further, gentlemen. [*to MENAECHEMUS*] What is the earliest thing you remember, tell me, in your own country?

MEN. Going with my father to Tarentum, his place of trade, and then straying from my father in the crowd and being carried off!

MEN. S. Lord above, preserve me!

MES. [*with asperity*] What are you bawling out for? Keep still, won't you! [*to MENAECHEMUS*] How old were you when your father took you away from home?

MEN. Seven; you see, I was just beginning to lose my first teeth. And I never saw my father after that.

MES. What? And how many sons did your father have then?

MEN. So far as I can now remember—two.

MES. Which was the older, you or your brother?

MEN. We were both of the same age.

MES. How can that be?

MEN. We were twins.

MEN. S. [*unable to contain himself longer*] Oh, God has been good to me!

MES. [*with finality*] If you interrupt, I prefer to keep still myself.

MEN. S. [*contritely*] I'll keep still.

MES. [*to MENAECHMUS*] Tell me, did you both have the same name?

MEN. Oh no. Why, I had the same name as now, Menaechmus; he was called Sosicles then.

MEN. S. [*disregarding MESSENIO's protest*] The proof's complete! I can't hold back—I must give him a hug! [*embracing MENAECHMUS*] God bless you, brother, my own twin brother! I am Sosicles!

MEN. [*doubtful*] How is it, then, you came to be called Menaechmus?

MEN. S. After word reached us that you * * * and that our father was dead, our grandfather changed my name; he gave me yours.

MEN. [*still doubtful*] No doubt this was the case. But answer me this question.

MEN. S. [*eagerly*] Ask it.

MEN. What was our mother's name?

MEN. S. Teuximarcha.

MEN. [*returning his embrace heartily*] Right! To see you, so un-hoped for, after all these years! Oh, God bless you!

MEN. S. And you, too, brother! I've searched and searched for you till this moment—and a sad, weary search it's been—and now you're found I'm happy.

MES. [*to his master*] This was how the wench here came to call you by his name; she mistook you for him, I suppose, when she invited you to lunch.

MEN. [*reflecting, then frankly*] Well, well! The fact is, I did tell them

to prepare lunch for me here to-day, unbeknown to my wife, whose mantle I stole from the house a while ago and gave to the wench here.

MEN. S. Is this mantle I have the one you speak of, brother? [*showing it*]

MEN. That's the one! How did it come into your hands?

MEN. S. The wench took me in here to luncheon and said I had given it to her. Lunch I did, deuced well, and drank, and enjoyed the girl, and carried off the mantle and this piece of jewellery. [*showing bracelet*]

MEN. [*laughing*] By Jove! I'm glad if you're my debtor for a bit of amusement. For when she invited you in, she took you for me.

MES. [*to MENAECHMUS*] You have no objection to my being free, as you ordered, have you, sir?

MEN. A perfectly just and reasonable request, brother. Grant it, for my sake.

MEN. S. [*to MESSENIO*] Be free.

MEN. Messenio, I congratulate you on your freedom!

MES. [*ingratiatingly*] But I need better auspices to be free for good, sirs. [*waits for some hint of further benefits*]

MEN. S. Now that things have turned out to our satisfaction, brother, let's both go back to our own country.

MEN. As you please, brother. I'll hold an auction here and sell all I have. In the meantime let's go inside for the present, brother.

MEN. S. By all means.

MES. Do you know what I want of you, sirs?

MEN. What?

MES. To let me be auctioneer.

MEN. You shall be.

MES. Well, then, do you want it announced at once that there'll be an auction?

MEN. Yes, a week from to-day.

MES. [*bawling*] Auction . . . of the effects of Menaechmus . . . one week from to-day in the morning, mind! . . . For sale . . . slaves, household goods, land, houses . . . everything! . . . For

sale . . . your own price . . . cash down! . . . For sale . . . even a wife, too . . . if any buyer appears! <i>[to</i> <i>spectators]</i> I don't believe the whole	auction will bring more than a mere— fifty thousand pounds. Now, specta- tors, fare ye well and give us your loud applause. <i>[Exeunt Omnes.]</i>
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CHAPTER III

THE RISE OF DRAMA IN ENGLAND

A preceding chapter has noted the progressive degeneracy and ultimate extinction of the Roman drama. It is inconceivable, however, that all elements of drama fell into desuetude, that all actors and theater-people forsook entirely their ancient ways. Though the majority doubtless undertook other means of livelihood, some must have become strollers, going from place to place with songs, pantomimes, and tricks of skill. The curious reader who is interested in the various medieval substitutes for the theater may be referred to E. K. Chambers's detailed study *The Medieval Stage*. In any event—whatever germs of the old drama may have passed on into the life-current of the newer nations which were evolving out of declining Rome—the drama ceased to exist either as an institution or as literature.

By a strange irony of fate, the Church, which had been largely instrumental in breaking up the corrupted ancient drama, was the fostering nurse of the new. As the years passed, the late Roman plays and the evil connotation which they gave to spectacle had alike gone from men's minds. About the period A.D. 800 to 900, however, the church planted—all unconsciously, of course—the seeds of the new drama. Spectacle was introduced as an adjunct to the liturgy. Action and dialogue helped to make vivid certain great events in the life of Christ—events such as the nativity and the resurrection. Dialogue, much as in the modern catechism, had been previously used in more or less dramatic exposition, and now brief playlets came to be inserted in the liturgy to be sung or spoken with appropriate action.

The oldest extant liturgical trope or playlet found in England is *Quem Quæritis* (called, as usual, from the first words of the dialogue), based on the interview between the three Marys and the Angel at the tomb of the risen Christ. (St. Matthew, 28, 1-7; St. Mark, 16, 1-7.) The dialogue proceeded as follows:

ANGELICA *de Christi Resurrectione*:

Quem quæritis in sepulchro, [o] Christicolæ?

SANCTARUM MULIERUM *responsio*:

Ihesum Nazarenum crucifixum, o cælicola!

ANGELICE *uocis consolatio*:

Non est hic, surrexit ut prædixerat,
Ite, nuntiate quia surrexit, dicentes:

SANCTARUM MULIERUM *ad omnem clerum modulatio*:

Alleluia! Resurrexit Dominus hodie,
Leo fortis, Christus filius Dei! Deo
gratias dicite, eia!

Dicat ANGELUS:

Uenite uidete locum ubi positus erat Dominus,
alleluia! alleluia!

Iterum dicat ANGELUS:

Cito euntes dicite discipulis quia surrexit
Dominus, alleluia! alleluia!

MULIERES una uoce canant iubilantes:

Surrexit Dominus de sepulchro,
Qui pro nobis pependit in ligno, alleluia!¹

This little playlet was found in a manuscript which was preserved in Winchester Cathedral. It dates, in all probability, from the tenth century. It is typical of similar tropes, complete or fragmentary, which have survived in England. Being a product of the Church, however, and in the Latin language, it is not different from extant specimens of liturgical drama on the continent. Its origin in a ritual service suggests comparison with the origin of the drama of Greece and of other European peoples. There was nothing peculiarly English about the first drama to appear in England.

It would seem that the little liturgical plays were very popular. Crowds surged into the churches at Christmas and at Easter, and the spectacle often had to be given with the spectators in the churchyard. A secular element soon crept in. In any case, in 1210 Pope Innocent III ordered the dramas outside of the Church. Here was a forward step. The plays became more elaborate; still larger audiences gathered; the vernacular came to be used. In a word, the plays developed rapidly away from their original character as adjuncts to a religious service.

The next important step in the development of native English drama resulted from the institution of the festival of *Corpus Christi* by Pope Urban IV in 1264. In time a procession came to be a special feature of this festival. The scriptural plays were, then, for the most part, no longer given individually, but as short episodes in a connected pageant offered at the Corpus Christi season. The plays were referred to in their time by the distinctive term, *miracles*. A later differentiation between *mysteries* as plays from the Bible and *miracles* as plays from the lives of saints is sometimes made but is hardly desirable, since it applies to the pageant plays a term by which they were never known in the England which produced them. Moreover, English plays of the saints were never important and survivals of them are negligible.

The miracles often, it would seem, were written by ecclesiastics—for learning was generally associated with the church—but were produced by the guilds, the famous medieval societies, or companies, of those engaged in the various

¹ *The ANGEL concerning the resurrection of Christ:*

Whom do you seek in the tomb, worshipers of Christ?

Reply of the HOLY WOMEN:

Jesus of Nazareth who was crucified, O dweller in heaven.

The consolation of the voice of the ANGEL:

He is not here, he has risen as he foretold; go announce that he has risen, saying:

Song of the HOLY WOMEN to all the clergy:

Hallelujah! The Lord has risen today, a brave lion,
Christ the son of God!

Let the ANGEL say:

Come and see the place where the Lord was laid, hallelujah, hallelujah!

Let the ANGEL say again:

Go quickly and tell the disciples that the Lord has risen, hallelujah!

Let the WOMEN sing in unison, with shouts of joy:

The Lord has hung upon the cross for us, has risen from the tomb, hallelujah!

trades or businesses. The secularization of the drama did not, however, immediately bring about the introduction of lay or profane subjects. The great Bible story was the source of the successive episodes of all the cycles of miracle plays. The guilds were sometimes entrusted with the presentation of episodes of supposed appropriateness—the carpenters with the building of the ark, the jewelers with the scene of the three wise men, the fishmongers with the deluge.

The miracle plays were presented on four- or six-wheeled pageant wagons, drawn by horses or perhaps more usually propelled by members of a guild. Each of these movable stages offered some scene from the story of the Bible. The first wagon would halt at a previously announced point (perhaps an important street-corner) while the players performed their act; then it would go on to the next station. Meanwhile, the second wagon would come up. Thus from the Creation to the Last Judgment, scene after scene was brought before the eyes of the spectators who watched from the street or from a convenient window or balcony. The pageant-wagons were usually of two stories. The lower part was enclosed as a dressing-room. The upper part was an open platform or stage to which the actors ascended by a stairway or ladder. Scenery, when used at all, was primitive. Hell-mouth was represented by a jaw-like opening through which smoke rose from a concealed brazier. Heaven was a canopied enclosure, surrounded by breast-high curtains. Conventionally appropriate costumes were worn by the actors—celestial characters, for instance, being clad in cloth of gold.

Miracle plays were performed at a number of towns. Three regular cycles have come down to the present day. These are associated with the Northern towns of York, Chester, and Wakefield—the plays of the latter cycle being sometimes called the Towneley plays from the name of the family in whose library they were discovered. There are two cycles associated with Coventry. Of the regular Coventry Corpus Christi pageant cycle, only two plays have survived. The other Coventry cycle, which has been preserved in full, is now believed by Professor Allardyce Nicoll and others to have been presented otherwise than on pageant-wagons. Other survivals of the cycles include one play each from the towns of Newcastle and Norwich. A few independent scriptural plays have also survived.

The presentation of a cycle of plays was no small matter. The York cycle comprised some forty-eight scenes, the Wakefield thirty-two, the Chester twenty-five, the Coventry forty-three. From three to six days were required for a complete series of pageants to pass a given station. Announcements in advance specified such details as the halts of the wagons in the cycle. The occasion of the plays was a gathering, usually annual, for trade and barter as well as for amusement and instruction. The Corpus Christi plays were a holiday entertainment for people much like the nine and twenty of Chaucer's *Prologue*, sturdy humor-loving provincials of an England untouched as yet by the Reformation.

The procession was the usual though not the only method of presenting the miracles. Performances are known to have been given in an outdoor amphitheater in Cornwall, and it is believed that the so-called Coventry cycle may have been staged on a large platform by a company which went from city to city. This method of presentation must have been very similar to the method of presentation of similar plays in France.

The miracle plays possess no sense of fitness, no unity of tone. Sublime and ridiculous are astoundingly mingled. In *Noah's Flood* the bickering of Noah's wife and the commands of God are juxtaposed. The setting, whatever it may purport to be, is unmistakably contemporary England. There are, for example, anachronistic references to "Stafford blue" and to Saint Thomas of Kent. As products of different authors, the plays differ in quality, but in general possess very

little literary merit. The Towneley plays are characterized by much rustic humor, whereas the York plays are the most serious in their tone. One of the best individual plays in style, as well as in dramatic form, is the *Abraham and Isaac*, known as the Brome play from the discovery of the manuscript at Brome Hall, Suffolk.

Contemporary churchmen differed in their attitude toward the miracles. Some condemned them entirely. Others took the attitude—later propounded by Molière—that since people would have amusement anyway they had better have plays than less worthy diversions. According to one expositor, it was surely not worse to act than to paint sacred subjects, and pictures were a common decoration of the medieval church.

The miracle plays flourished from about 1275 to late in the sixteenth century, their neglect being finally brought about—in part, at least—by the rise of the drama patterned on Roman models. The last recorded writer of miracles was one John Bale (1495-1563), author of the historical morality, *King John*.

The medieval drama in England was largely religious; but there were certain secular entertainments of a dramatic nature. Mumming was a popular custom. The St. George play was frequently given—doubtless quite in the manner of the late survival described by Thomas Hardy in *The Return of the Native*. Pageants and masques were also presented. The inn-yards were the scene of various types of spectacular amusement, for they were the main home of the secular drama in England prior to the opening of the first theater in 1576.

Closely related to the miracle play was the native English morality. In this type of play the characters are not individuals but personified abstractions—Everyman, Good Deeds, Knowledge, Death, Beauty, Goods, and the like. The purpose was instruction in the conduct of life. The best known surviving morality play is *Everyman*. This allegorical drama was, it seems, translated from the Dutch. Other early moralities were *Mankind* and *The Castle of Perseverance*. The morality has never been the dominant dramatic type, but it is not extinct. In the twentieth century, *Everyman* is frequently revived and several new moralities—among them *Experience* and *Everywoman*—have been produced.

In the early sixteenth-century product, the interlude, the secularization of the native English drama is seen to be complete. The term *interlude* may imply merely a play between several actors or a dramatic work designed to be presented in the interval of some longer form of entertainment. The first implication is obviously, the latter presumably, justifiable. The chief writer of interludes was John Heywood. His best known pieces are the coarse but vigorous skits, *The Four P's* and *The Merry Tale of Johan-Johan, Tyb, and Sir Jhan*. The four "P's" are a palmer, a pardoner, a potycary [apothecary], and a pedler. Each bets that he can tell a more preposterous story than the others. The prize goes to the palmer, who claims he has never seen a woman out of patience. The *Merry Tale* is a coarse variant of the old triangle—the wife, the lover, and the deceived husband. The quality of an interlude may be very well appreciated by considering the first six scenes of the Towneley *Second Shepherds' Play* without the last two. Other interludes were the anonymous *Hyckescorner* (with morality elements) and the *Play of the Weather* (a farce), and Medwall's *Fulgens and Lucre*s (a romance). What the native drama would have become if its development had not been interrupted is an interesting speculation, but is nothing more than a speculation. Around the middle of the sixteenth century in England, drama received a quickening impulse and much needed technical improvement from the increasing study of the Roman drama—specifically the comedies of Plautus and Terence and the tragedies of Seneca.

The Latin plays were not unknown in the Middle Ages. Terence must have

been read by a few Englishmen in the fifteenth century, and Plautus, also, after the discovery of his comedies in 1427. Most scholarship, however, was monastic, and a churchman would naturally find in Latin drama little which he would wish to imitate or to circulate.

The fifteenth century, moreover, was a disastrous one for all literature save the popular ballad. Men who might have been writers were engaged in or discouraged by the continual foreign and domestic wars. Two things, however, pointed the way to better things in the next century. In 1476 Caxton established the first English printing-press at the sign of the Red Pale, Westminster. In 1485 Henry Tudor, Earl of Richmond, ascended the throne as Henry VII and (with his son, Henry VIII, and the latter's daughter, Elizabeth) gave England a stable government.

Around 1500, the inquiring Renaissance Englishmen began to read Plautus. More's *Utopia* (1516) contained a passage noting the inappropriateness of combining comedy and tragedy in the same work. Holinshed states, moreover, that at a state entertainment of Henry VIII in the great hall at Greenwich in 1520, "there was a goodlie comedie of Plautus pleied."

In other words, the Latin influence had come. From ancient dramatists and critics, English scholars and playwrights derived the conception of a long play carefully constructed. Many valuable innovations were made.

First of all, there was the division of a play into acts. The interlude floundered; so did the romance, so did the epic. It is hard to see how Elizabethan drama could have attained its glory without the minimum of structural care compelled by the accepted division of a play into five acts. The restraint was a necessity in an exuberant period. Only some such authoritative model as the Latin could have constrained Lyly, author of the rambling *Euphues* romances, to write plays as compact as *Alexander and Campaspe* or *Mother Bombie*.

In the second place, there was an increasing understanding of the principle of the three unities. Fortunately, Shakespeare and his fellows did not usually restrict their plays to a single action taking place within one city in one day. But a knowledge of the rule of the unities doubtless supplemented the principle of five acts in preventing plays from being conglomerates like the Elizabethan romances.

A third important lesson from the Romans was the knowledge of the difference between comedy and tragedy. Fortunately most English dramatists did not follow this precept in a servile manner. On the other hand, however, anyone who has read a few miracle plays—for example, the Towneley *Second Shepherd's Play*—can see that some such criterion of fitness and propriety was absolutely necessary for English drama.

A fourth gain was variety in subject-matter. Plots were hard to find, for the Renaissance Englishman was an introducer of foreign models rather than an originator of native ones and was an industrious refurbisher of old plots rather than an inventor of new. Variety of plot was necessary for the great flowering of drama. The native plays had been very slow indeed in getting away from biblical subject-matter, but the Latin drama opened up a whole new storehouse of plots.

In evoking English imitation, Latin comedy preceded Latin tragedy by a decade or two. In the second quarter of the sixteenth century there flourished in England one Nicholas Udall, translator, scholar, author of a Latin text, and Master of Eton. Udall wrote—about 1542 and doubtless for presentation by his boys—the first English comedy of the Latin type, *Ralph Roister Doister*.

In many respects *Ralph Roister Doister* is a palpable imitation of the typical Roman comedy. The scene is laid in a street or field upon which open the

houses of important characters. The plot is concerned with Merrygreek's egging Roister Doister on to a mirth-provoking courtship of the already affianced Dame Custance. The title character, Ralph, is a copy of the Miles Gloriosus of Plautine comedy; and Merrygreek, the parasite, and other characters have Latin prototypes. But there are native elements also; dialect, characterization, and humor are unmistakably English. By introducing a new technique, Udall and his successors established in England a new type of comedy. *Ralph Roister Doister* is an imitation of Plautus; but it is also the first "regular" English comedy. In its five acts and its single setting it seems—as a matter of fact—an age this side of the native drama, the decline of which it accelerated. The pageant-wagon of the miracles is far in the past, but the stage of today can easily be made to accommodate *Ralph Roister Doister* much in the manner in which that play was originally intended to be given.

Competing with *Ralph Roister Doister* for early honors in English comedy is *Gammer Gurton's Needle*, produced about 1559-60. Full of interesting details is the title page of the earliest extant edition:

A RYGHTE

Pithy, Pleafaunt and me
rie Comedie: In-
tytuled *Gammer gur-*
tons Needle: Played on
Stage, not longe
ago in Chri-
stes
Colledge in Cambridge.

Made by Mr. S. Mr. of Art.

Imprinted at London in
Fleete streat beneth the Con-
duit at the signe of S. John
Euangelist by Tho-
mas Colwell.

Gammer Gurton's Needle has the classic structure of *Ralph Roister Doister*, but is thoroughly of the English tradition in its tone. We may regard it then as exemplifying, even more than *Ralph Roister Doister*, a general amalgamation of the native and Latin elements in English comedy. The way is now open for Lyly, for Shakespeare, and the comic writers of the later succession.

Latin tragedy was but slightly later than comedy in winning imitation in England. The first regular tragedy was *Gorboduc*, or *Ferrex and Porrex* by the two collaborators, Thomas Sackville (later Lord Buckhurst) and Thomas Norton. This play was "fhowed on ftage before the Queenes maiestie . . . the xviii day of Ianuarie, 1561 by the Gentlemen of the Inner Temple." It adhered to the standard definition of tragedy as given by Chaucer in the *Monk's prologue*:

Tragedie is to seyn a certeyn storie,
As olde bokes maken us memorie,
Of him that stood in greet prosperitee
And is y-fallen out of heigh degree
Into miserie, and endeth wrecchedly.

The scene is laid in ancient Britain, the plot being based on a legend in Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Regum Britanniae*. An old king, Gorboduc, divides his kingdom between his two sons, Ferrex and Porrex, with disasters of the

most unnatural kind as a sequel. The bloody plot, the chorus, the long ranting speeches, and the use of the supernatural, bespeak an indebtedness to Seneca—the dominant influence at this time in establishing the new tragedy in England. The meter of *Gorboduc* is blank verse, a type felt most nearly to approximate the senarius of Seneca—to whose plays, in fact, *Gorboduc* owes a direct debt.

With Latin comedy and tragedy thus firmly planted in England, times were ripe for the rapid development of the greatest age of English drama—the subject of the next chapter.

THE SECOND SHEPHERDS' PLAY

FROM THE TOWNELEY OR WAKEFIELD CYCLE

CHARACTERS

FIRST SHEPHERD.
SECOND SHEPHERD.
THIRD SHEPHERD.
MAK.
GILL, MAK'S wife.
AN ANGEL.
MARY.

SCENE—Bethlehem, and the open country near it.

SCENE I.

[Enter FIRST SHEPHERD.]

1 SHEP. Lord! what, these weathers
are cold! and I am ill happed;¹
I am near-hand² dold,³ so long have
I napped;
My legs they fold, my fingers are
chapped;
It is not as I would, for I am all
lapped
In sorrow.
In storms and tempest,
Now in the east, now in the west,
Woe is him has never rest,
Mid-day nor morrow!

But we seely⁴ shepherds, that walk
on the moor,
In faith, we are near-hands out of
the door;
No wonder, as it stands, if we be
poor,
For the tilth of our lands lies fallow
as the floor,
As ye ken.
We are so lamed,⁵
For-taxed⁶ and shamed,⁷
We are made hand-tamed
With these gentlery men.

¹ clothed. ² almost. ³ numb. ⁴ poor.
⁵ MS. *hamyd*, crippled. ⁶ overtaxed.
⁷ MS. *ramyd*, oppressed (?).

Thus they reave⁸ us our rest, Our
Lady them wary!⁹
These men that are lord-fast,¹⁰ they
cause the plough tarry.
That¹¹ men say is for the best, we
find it contrary;
Thus are husbands¹² opprest, in
point to miscarry
In life.

Thus hold they us under,
Thus they bring us in blunder;
It were great wonder,
And¹³ ever should we thrive.

For may he get a painted sleeve, or a
brooch nowadays,
Woe is him that him grieves, or once
again-says!¹⁴
Dare no man him reprieve,¹⁵ what
mastery he makes;¹⁶
And yet may no man believe one
word that he says,
No letter.
He can make purveyance,¹⁷
With boast and bragance,¹⁸
And all is through maintenance
Of men that are greater.

There shall come a swain, as proud
as a po,¹⁹
He must borrow my wain, my plough
also;
Then I am full fain to grant ere he
go.
Thus live we in pain, anger, and woe,
By night and day.
He must have if he longed,
If I should forego it;
I were better be hanged
Than once say him nay.

⁸ rob of. ⁹ curse.
¹⁰ bound to the service of lords.
¹¹ that which. ¹² husbandmen. ¹³ if.
¹⁴ speaks against him. ¹⁵ reprove.
¹⁶ however masterfully he acts.
¹⁷ the right to buy provisions for the royal
household at a fixed price, irrespective of the
market price.
¹⁸ bragging. ¹⁹ peacock.

It does me good, as I walk thus by
mine own,²⁰
Of this world for to talk in manner
of moan.²¹

To my sheep will I stalk and hearken
anon,
There abide on a balk,²² or sit on a
stone

Full soon,
For I trow, pardie,²³
True men if they be,
We get more company
Ere it be noon.

[Enter SECOND SHEPHERD.]

2. SHEP. Benste²⁴ and Dominus!
what may this bemean?²⁵

Why fares this world thus? Oft
have we not seen!

Lord, these weathers are spitous,²⁶
and the weathers full keen;
And the frosts so hideous they water
mine een,²⁷

No lie.

Now in dry, now in wet,
Now in snow, now in sleet,
When my shoon freeze to my feet
It is not all easy.

But as far as I ken, or yet as I go,
We seely wed-men dree mickle
woe;²⁸

We have sorrow then and then, it
falls oft so.

Seely Capel, our hen, both to and fro
She cackles;

But begin she to croak,

To groan or to cluck,

Woe is him, our cock,

For he is in the shackles.

These men that are wed have not all
their will;

When they are full hard stead,²⁹ they
sigh full still;

God wot they are led full hard and
full ill,

In bower nor in bed they say nought
theretill,³⁰

This tide.

My part have I found,
I know my lesson:
Woe is him that is bound,
For he must abide.

But now late in our lives—a marvel
to me,

That I think my heart rives such
wonders to see,

What that destiny drives, it should
so be!—

Some men will have two wives, and
some three,

In store.

Some are woe that have any;

But so far can³¹ I,

Woe is him that has many,

For he feels sore.

But young men of wooing, for God
that you bought,

Be well ware of wedding, and think
in your thought:

“Had I wist” is a thing it serves of
nought;

Mickle still mourning has wedding
home brought,

And griefs,

With many a sharp shower,

For thou may catch in an hour

That shall [savor] full sour

As long as thou lives.

For, as ever read I epistle, I have
one to my fere³²

As sharp as a thistle, as rough as a
briar;

She is browed like a bristle, with a
sour [looking]³³ cheer;

Had she once wet her whistle she
could sing full clear

Her pater-noster.

She is as great as a whale,

She has a gallon of gall;

By him that died for us all,

I would I had run till I had
lost her!

1 SHEP. God look over the row! full
deafly ye stand.

2 SHEP. Yea, the devil is thy maw, so
tarrying!

Saw thou anywhere of Daw?

³¹ know.

³² mate.

³³ MS. *loten*.

²⁰ by myself. ²¹ in a complaining way.

²² ridge. ²³ *par Dieu*.

²⁴ shortened from *Benedicite*; bless me!

²⁵ mean. ²⁶ spiteful. ²⁷ eyes.

²⁸ we poor married men endure much woe.

²⁹ bestead. ³⁰ thereto.

1 SHEP. Yea, on a lea³⁴ land
 Heard I him blow; he comes here at
 hand,
 Not far;
 Stand still.

2 SHEP. Why?

1 SHEP. For he comes, hope I.

2 SHEP. He will make us both a lie,
 But if³⁵ we beware.

[Enter THIRD SHEPHERD.]

3 SHEP. Christ's cross me speed, and
 Saint Nicholas!

Thereof had I need, it is worse than
 it was.

Whoso could, take heed, and let the
 world pass:

It is ever in dread and brittle as
 glass,

And slithers.³⁶

This world fared never so,
 With marvels mo and mo,
 Now in weal, now in woe,

And all-thing writhes.³⁷

Was never since Noah's flood such
 floods seen,

Winds and rains so rude, and storms
 so keen;

Some stammered, some stood in
 doubt, as I ween;

Now God turn all to good! I say as
 I mean.

For ponder:

These floods so they drown
 Both in fields and in town,
 And bear all down,

And that is a wonder.

We that walk in the nights, our cat-
 tle to keep,

We see sudden sights, when other
 men sleep.

Yet methink my heart lights—I see
 shrews³⁸ peep.

Ye are two tall * wights: ³⁹ I will give
 my sheep

A turn.

But full ill have I meant,

As I walk on this bent,⁴⁰

I may lightly repent,

My toes if I spurn.⁴¹

³⁴ fallow. ³⁵ unless.

³⁶ is slippery, unreliable. ³⁷ is awry.

³⁸ knaves. ³⁹ stout fellows. ⁴⁰ heath.

⁴¹ if I stumble.

Ah, sir, God you save, and master
 mine!

A drink fain would I have, and some-
 what to dine.

1 SHEP. Christ's curse, my knave,
 thou art a lither hind! ⁴²

2 SHEP. What, the boy list ⁴³ ravel!
 Abide unto syne; ⁴⁴

We have made it.⁴⁵

Ill thrift on thy pate!

Though the shrew came late,

Yet is he in state

To dine, if he had it.

3 SHEP. Such servants as I, that
 sweats and swinks,⁴⁶

Eats our bread full dry, and that
 me forthinks; ⁴⁷

We are oft wet and weary when
 master-men winks,⁴⁸

Yet comes full lately both dinners
 and drinks.

But naitly ⁴⁹

Both our dame and our sire,
 When we have run in the mire,

They can nip at our hire,⁵⁰

And pay us full lately.

But hear my truth, master, for the
 fare that ye make,

I shall do thereafter work as I
 take; ⁵¹

I shall do a little, sir, and among ⁵²
 ever lake,⁵³

For yet lay my supper never on my
 stomach

In fields.

Whereto should I threap? ⁵⁴

With my staff can I leap,

And men say "light cheap

Litherly foryields."⁵⁵

1 SHEP. Thou were an ill lad to ride
 a-woeing

With a man that had but little of
 spending.

⁴² lazy servant. ⁴³ pleases to.

⁴⁴ wait till later. ⁴⁵ i.e. our meal. ⁴⁶ work.

⁴⁷ repents. ⁴⁸ sleep. ⁴⁹ thoroughly.

⁵⁰ take a bit off our wages.

⁵¹ i.e. I'll work as I'm paid.

⁵² now and then. ⁵³ play.

⁵⁴ a cheap bargain yields poorly. ⁵⁵ argue.

* For a valuable elucidation of this passage, see Kemp Malone, "A Note on the Towneley *Secunda Pastorum*," *Modern Language Notes*, January, 1925.

2 SHEP. Peace, boy, I bade; no more
jangling,
Or I shall make thee full rad,⁵⁶ by
the heaven's king,
With thy gauds!⁵⁷

Where are our sheep, boy, we scorn?

3 SHEP. Sir, this same day at morn
I them left in the corn,
When they rang Lauds;⁵⁸

They have pasture good, they can
not go wrong.

1 SHEP. That is right. By the rood,
these nights are long!
Yet I would, ere we yode,⁵⁹ one gave
us a song.

2 SHEP. So I thought as I stood, to
mirth us among.⁶⁰

3 SHEP. I grant.

1 SHEP. Let me sing the tenory.

2 SHEP. And I the treble so high.

3 SHEP. Then the mean falls to me;
Let see how ye chant.⁶¹
[A Song.]

[Enter MAK, with a cloak thrown
over his smock.]

MAK. Now, Lord, for thy names
seven,⁶² that made both moon
and stars,

Well more than I can neven,⁶³ thy
will, Lord, of me tharns;⁶⁴

I am all uneven,⁶⁵ that moves oft my
harns;⁶⁶

Now would God I were in heaven,
for there weep no bairns
So still!

1 SHEP. Who is that pipes so poor?

MAK. Would God ye wist how I fared!
Lo, a man that walks on the moor,
And has not all his will!

2 SHEP. Mak, where has thou gone?
Tell us tidings.

3 SHEP. Is he come? Then each one
take heed to his thing.
[Takes his cloak from him.]

⁵⁶ afraid.

⁵⁷ tricks.

⁵⁸ an early morning service of the church.

⁵⁹ went. ⁶⁰ for mirth among us.

⁶¹ the song is wanting.

⁶² the seven sacred names of God in rab-
binical literature. ⁶³ name.

⁶⁴ lacks; i.e. thy will toward me leaves some-
thing to be desired.

⁶⁵ upset.

⁶⁶ brains.

MAK. What! I be a yeoman, I tell
you, of the king;
The self and the same; sent⁶⁸ from
a great lording,
And such.

Fie on you! Go hence

Out of my presence!

I must have reverence.

Why, who be I?

1 SHEP. Why make ye it so quaint?
Mak, ye do wrong.

2 SHEP. But, Mak, list ye saint?⁶⁸ I
trow that ye long.

3 SHEP. I trow the shrew can paint,
the devil might him hang!

MAK. I shall make complaint, and
make you all to thwang.⁶⁹

At a word,

And tell even how ye doth.

1 SHEP. But, Mak, is that sooth?

Now take out that southern tooth,⁷⁰
And set in a . . . !

2 SHEP. Mak, the devil in your eye!
a stroke would I lend you.

3 SHEP. Mak, know ye not me? By
God, I could teen⁷¹ you.

MAK. God look you all three! me-
thought I had seen you.

Ye are a fair company.

1 SHEP. Can ye now mean you?⁷²

2 SHEP. Shrew, jape!⁷³

Thus late as thou goes,

What will men suppose?

And thou has an ill noise⁷⁴

Of stealing of sheep.

MAK. And I am true as steel, all men
wit!

But a sickness I feel, that holds me
full hot,

My bell fares not well, it is out of
estate.

3 SHEP. Seldom lies the devil dead
by the gate.⁷⁵

MAK. Therefore

⁶⁸ lit. messenger: MS. *send*.

⁶⁹ play the saint. ⁷⁰ be flogged.

⁷¹ i.e. which makes a south of England man
deceitful.

⁷² hurt, beat.

⁷³ remember.

⁷⁴ joke on.

⁷⁵ reputation.

⁷⁶ a proverb, implying suspicion of Mak: it's
not safe to trust appearances.

Full sore am I and ill,
If I stand stone still;
I eat not a needle
This month and more.

1 SHEP. How fares thy wife? By my hood, how fares she?

MAK. Lies weltering,⁷⁶ by the rood, by the fire, lo!

And a house full of brewed⁷⁷ she drinks well too;

Ill speed other good that she will do
But so!

Eats as fast as she can,
And each year that comes to man,
She brings forth a lakin,⁷⁸
And some years two.

But were I not more gracious, and richer by far,

I were eaten out of house and of harbor;

Yet is she a foul dowse,⁷⁹ if ye come near.

There is none that trows nor knows worse

Than ken I.

Now will ye see what I proffer?

To give all in my coffer

To-morn⁸⁰ next to offer⁸¹

Her head-mass penny.

2 SHEP. I wot so forwaked⁸² is none in this shire:

I would sleep if I took less to my hire.

3 SHEP. I am cold and naked, and would have a fire.

1 SHEP. I am weary, for-raked,⁸³ and run in the mire.

Wake thou!

2 SHEP. Nay, I will lie down-by, For I must sleep, truly.

3 SHEP. As good a man's son was I As any of you.

But, Mak, come hither! between shall thou lie down.

MAK. Then might I let⁸⁴ you bedene⁸⁵ of that ye would round,⁸⁶

No dread.

From my top to my toe

Manus tuas commendo,

Pontio Pilato!

Christ's cross me speed!

[*Then he rises, while the shepherds are asleep, and says:*]

Now were time for a man that lacks what he would,

To stalk privily then unto a fold,
And nimbly to work then, and be not too bold,

For he might aby⁸⁷ the bargain, if it were told,

At the ending.

Now were time for to reel;⁸⁸

But he needs good counsel

That fain would fare well,

And has but little spending.

But about you a circle as round as a moon,

Till I have done that I will, till that it be noon,

That ye lie stone-still, till that I have done,

And I shall say there-till of good words a few

On height;⁸⁹

Over your heads my hand I lift,

Out go your eyes, fordo your sight!⁹⁰

But yet I must make better shift,
And it be right.

Lord, what, they sleep hard! that may ye all hear.

Was I never a shepherd, but now will I lere.⁹¹

⁷⁶ lounging. ⁷⁷ i.e. ale.

⁷⁸ plaything, i.e. baby.

⁷⁹ dear, *douce*; ironical.

⁸⁰ tomorrow; MS. inserts *at* before *next*.

⁸¹ to pay for her funeral service.

⁸² worn out with watching.

⁸³ worn out with walking.

⁸⁴ hinder. ⁸⁵ altogether.

⁸⁶ whisper; two lines seem to be missing here.

⁸⁷ pay dearly for.

⁸⁸ set about the business. ⁸⁹ aloud.

⁹⁰ Mak pretends to cast a charm over the sleeping shepherds.

⁹¹ learn.

If the flock be scared, yet shall I nip near.

How! Draw hitherward! now mends our cheer

From sorrow.

A fat sheep, I dare say,

A good fleece, dare I lay.

Eft quite⁹² when I may,

But this will I borrow.

[*Exit, with sheep.*]

SCENE II.

[*MAK at the Door of His House.*]

MAK. How, Gill, art thou in? Get us some light.

WIFE. Who makes such din this time of the night?

I am set for to spin; I hope not I might

Rise a penny to win. I shrew them on height

So fares!

A housewife that has been

To be raced thus between!

Here may no note⁹³ be seen

For such small chares.⁹⁴

MAK. Good wife, open the heck!⁹⁵ Sees thou not what I bring?

WIFE. I may thole⁹⁶ thee draw the sneek.⁹⁷ Ah, come in, my sweet-ing!

MAK. Yea, thou there not reck of my long standing.

WIFE. By the naked neck art thou like for to hang!

MAK. Do way!

I am worthy my meat,

For in a strait can I get

More than they that swink and sweat

All the long day.

Thus it fell to my lot, Gill, I had such grace.

WIFE. It were a foul blot to be hanged for the case.

MAK. I have scaped, Gillot, oft as hard a grace.⁹⁸

WIFE. But so long goes the pot to the water, men says,

At last

⁹² repay.

⁹³ work.

⁹⁴ jobs.

⁹⁵ door.

⁹⁶ allow.

⁹⁷ latch.

⁹⁸ blow.

Comes it home broken.

MAK. Well know I the token,

But let it never be spoken.

But come and help fast.

I would he were slain, I list well eat:
This twelvemonth was I not so fain
of one sheep-meat.

WIFE. Come they ere he be slain, and hear the sheep bleat—

MAK. Then might I be ta'en: that were a cold sweat!

Go spar⁹⁹

The gate door.

WIFE. Yes, Mak,

For and they come at thy back—

MAK. Then might I aby, for all the pack,

The devil of the worse!¹⁰⁰

WIFE. A good bound¹⁰¹ have I spied, since thou can none:

Here shall we him hide till they be gone,

In my cradle abide—let me alone—
And I shall lie beside in childbed and groan.

MAK. Thou rede!¹⁰²

And I shall say thou was lighted¹⁰³

Of a knave child this night.

WIFE. Now, well is me! Day bright,
That ever I was bred!

This is a good guise and a far cast;
Yet a woman's advice helps at the last!

I wot never who spies; again go thou fast!

MAK. But I come ere they rise, else blows a cold blast!

I will go sleep.

SCENE III.

[*MAK Returns to the SHEPHERDS.*]

Yet sleeps all this meinie,¹⁰⁴

And I shall go stalk privily,

As it had never been I

That carried their sheep.

⁹⁹ shut.

¹⁰⁰ then might I have a devil of a time from the whole pack (roughly).

¹⁰¹ trick.

¹⁰² delivered.

¹⁰³ advise well.

¹⁰⁴ company.

1 SHEP. *Resurrex a mortuis!*¹⁰⁵ have
hold my hand!
Judas carnas dominus! I may not
well stand.
My foot sleeps, by Jesus! and I water
fasting.

I thought that we laid us full near
England.

2 SHEP. Ah yea!
Lord, what, I have slept well!
As fresh as an eel,
As light I me feel
As leaf on a tree.

3 SHEP. Benste¹⁰⁶ be herein! So my
[body] quakes,
My heart is out of skin, what-so it
makes.
Who makes all this din? So my
brows black!
To the door will I win. Hark, fel-
lows, wake!

We were four:

See ye anywhere of Mak now?

1 SHEP. We were up ere thou.

2 SHEP. Man, I give God a vow,
Yet yede¹⁰⁷ he nowhere.

3 SHEP. Methought he was lapt in a
wolfskin.

1 SHEP. So are many happed now:
namely, within.

3 SHEP. When we had long napped,
methought with a gin¹⁰⁸
A fat sheep he trapped, but he made
no din.

2 SHEP. Be still!
Thy dream makes thee wood,¹⁰⁹
It is but phantom, by the rood.

1 SHEP. Now God turn all to good,
If it be his will!

2 SHEP. Rise, Mak, for shame! thou
lies right long.

MAK. Now Christ's holy name be us
among!

What is this? For Saint James, I
may not well go!

I trow I be the same. Ah, my neck
has lain wrong
Enough,

Mickle thank, since yester-even!
Now, by Saint Stephen,
I was flayed¹¹⁰ with a sweven!¹¹¹
My heart out of-slough.¹¹²

I thought Gill began to croak, and
travail full sad,
Well near at the first cock, of a
young lad
For to mend our flock. Then be I
never glad;

I have tow on my rock,¹¹³ more than
ever I had.

Ah, my head!

A house full of young tharms,¹¹⁴
The devil knock out their harns!¹¹⁵
Woe is him has many bairns,
And thereto little bread!

I must go home, by your leave, to
Gill, as I thought.

I pray you look my sleeve, that I
steal nought:

I am loth you to grieve, or from you
take aught.

[Exit MAK.]

3 SHEP. Go forth, ill might thou
cheve!¹¹⁶

Now would I we sought,

This morn,

That we had all our store.

1 SHEP. But I will go before.

Let us meet.

2 SHEP. Where?

3 SHEP. At the crooked thorn.

SCENE IV.

[MAK's House.]

MAK. [Knocking.] Undo this door!
who is here? How long shall I
stand?

WIFE. Who makes such a bere?¹¹⁷—
Now walk in the waniand!¹¹⁸

¹¹⁰ frightened. ¹¹¹ dream.

¹¹² jumped out of my breast (?).

¹¹³ distaff: more to provide for.

¹¹⁴ bellies, i.e. children.

¹¹⁵ brains. ¹¹⁶ thrive.

¹¹⁷ noise.

¹¹⁸ waning of the moon—an unlucky season.

¹⁰⁵ Mock Latin here and in following line.

¹⁰⁶ God's blessing.

¹⁰⁷ went. ¹⁰⁸ trick.

¹⁰⁹ mad.

MAK. Ah, Gill, what cheer?—It is I,
Mak, your husband.

WIFE. Then may we see here the devil
in a band,
Sir Guile!¹¹⁹

Lo, he comes with a late,¹²⁰
As he were holden in the throat.
I may not sit at my note¹²¹
A hand-long while.

MAK. Will ye hear what fare she
makes to get her a gloze?¹²²
And does nought but lakes,¹²³ and
claws her toes.

WIFE. Why, who wanders, who wakes,
who comes, who goes?
Who brews, who bakes? What
makes me thus hose?
And then

It is ruth¹²⁴ to behold,
Now in hot, now in cold;
Full woful is the household
That wants a woman.

But what end hast thou made with
the herds,¹²⁵ Mak?

MAK. The last word that they said
when I turned my back,
They would look that they had their
sheep, all the pack.

I hope they will not be well paid
when they their sheep lack,
Pardie!

But howso the game goes,
To me they will suppose,¹²⁶
And make a foul noise,
And cry out upon me.

But thou must do as thou hight,¹²⁷

WIFE. I accord me thereto:
I shall swaddle him right in my
cradle.

If it were a greater sleight, yet could
I help till.¹²⁸

I will lie down straight; come hap¹²⁹
me.

MAK. I will.

WIFE. Behind!

¹¹⁹ The meaning of these two lines is not
clear; apparently something uncomplimentary.

¹²⁰ noise. ¹²¹ work. ¹²² excuse. ¹²³ plays.

¹²⁴ pity. ¹²⁵ shepherds.

¹²⁶ suspect. ¹²⁷ promised.

¹²⁸ toward our purpose. ¹²⁹ wrap up.

Come Coll and his marrow,¹³⁰
They will nip us full narrow.

MAK. But I may cry out "Har-
row!"¹³¹
The sheep if they find.

WIFE. Harken ay when they call:
they will come anon.

Come and make ready all, and sing
by thine own;

Sing "Lullay!" thou shall, for I must
groan,

And cry out by the wall on Mary
and John,

[Full]¹³² sore.

Sing "Lullay" on fast
When thou hears at the last;
And but I play a false cast,
Trust me no more.

SCENE V.

[The Fields.]

3 SHEP. Ah, Coll, good morn! Why
sleeps thou not?

1 SHEP. Alas, that ever was I born!
We have a foul blot!

A fat wether have we lorn.¹³³

3 SHEP. Marry, Gods forbid!

2 SHEP. Who should do us that scorn?
That were a foul spot.

1 SHEP. Some shrew.¹³⁴
I have sought with my dogs,
All Horbury Shrogs,¹³⁵
And of fifteen hogs
Found I but one ewe.

3 SHEP. Now trow me if ye will: by
Saint Thomas of Kent,¹³⁶
Either Mak or Gill was at that as-
sent!

1 SHEP. Peace, man, be still! I saw
when he went.

Thou slanderes him ill; thou ought to
repent,
Good speed.

¹³⁰ mate. ¹³¹ a call for help.

¹³² MS. for. ¹³³ lost. ¹³⁴ knave.

¹³⁵ Horbury Thickets; Horbury is a village
near Wakefield. The reference helps to lo-
calize the Towneley plays at Wakefield.

¹³⁶ Thomas à Becket, buried in Canterbury
Cathedral, in Kent.

2 SHEP. Now as ever might I thee,¹³⁷
 If I should even here die,
 I would say it were he
 That did that same deed.

3 SHEP. Go we thither, I rede, and
 run on our feet.
 Shall I never eat bread, the sooth till
 I wit.

1 SHEP. Nor drink in my head with
 him till I meet.

2 SHEP. I will rest in no stead¹³⁸ till
 that I him greet,
 My brother.
 One I will hight:¹³⁹
 Till I see him in sight
 Shall I never sleep one night
 There¹⁴⁰ I do another.

SCENE VI.

[*The SHEPHERDS Come to MAK's House.*]

3 SHEP. Will ye hear how they
 hack!¹⁴¹ our sire¹⁴² list croon.

1 SHEP. Heard I never none crack so
 clear out of tune.
 Call on him.

2 SHEP. Mak! undo your door soon.
 MAK. Who is it that spake, as it were
 noon,

On loft?¹⁴³

Who is that, I say?

3 SHEP. Good fellows, were it day!

MAK. As far as ye may,
 Good, speak soft,

Over a sick woman's head that is at
 malease;¹⁴⁴

I had liefer be dead or she had any
 disease.

WIFE. Go to another stead; I may not
 well queue.¹⁴⁵

Each foot that ye tread goes through
 my nose,
 So high!

1 SHEP. Tell us, Mak, if ye may,
 How fare ye, I say?

MAK. But are ye in this town to-day?
 Now how fare ye?

¹³⁷ thrive.

¹³⁹ one thing I promise.

¹³⁸ place.

¹⁴⁰ where.

¹⁴¹ sing; the shepherds hear Mak and Gill
 singing their pretended lullaby.

¹⁴³ i.e. Mak.

¹⁴² loudly.

¹⁴⁴ in distress.

¹⁴⁵ meaning unknown (N. E. D.); perhaps
 wheeze, breathe?

Ye have run in the mire, and are wet
 yet;

I shall make you a fire, if ye will sit.
 A nurse would I hire; think ye one
 yet.¹⁴⁶

Well quit is my hire—¹⁴⁷ my dream
 this is it—¹⁴⁸

A season.

I have bairns, if ye knew,
 Well more than enow;
 But we must drink as we brew,
 And that is but reason.

I would ye dined ere ye yode; me-
 think that ye sweat.

2 SHEP. Nay, neither mends our
 mood,¹⁴⁹ drink nor meat.

MAK. Why, sir, ails you aught but
 good?

3 SHEP. Yea, our sheep that we get,
 Are stolen as they yode; our loss is
 great.

MAK. Sirs, drink!

Had I been there,
 Some should have bought it full sore.

1 SHEP. Marry, some men trows that
 ye were,
 And that us forthinks.¹⁵⁰

2 SHEP. Mak, some men trows that it
 should be ye.

3 SHEP. Either ye or your spouse; so
 say we.

MAK. Now if ye have suspicion to
 Gill or to me,

Come and rip our house, and then
 may ye see

Who had her,

If I any sheep fot,¹⁵¹

Either cow or stot,¹⁵²

And Gill, my wife, rose not

Here since she laid her.

As I am both true and leal, to God
 here I pray,

That this be the first meal that I
 shall eat this day.

1 SHEP. Mak, as I have seel,¹⁵³ ad-
 vise thee, I say;

¹⁴⁶ i.e. tell me of one if you can.

¹⁴⁷ I am well paid.

¹⁴⁸ i.e. this is just what I dreamed.

¹⁴⁹ helps our case. ¹⁵⁰ makes us repent.

¹⁵¹ fetched.

¹⁵² steer.

¹⁵³ bliss.

He learned timely to steal, that could
not say nay.

WIFE. I swelt!¹⁵⁴

Out, thieves, from my won!¹⁵⁵

Ye come to rob us, for the nonce.

MAK. Hear ye not how she groans?
Your hearts should melt.

WIFE. Out, thieves, from my bairn!
Nigh him not there!

MAK. Wist ye how she had fared, your
hearts would be sore.

Ye do wrong, I you warn, that thus
comes before

To a woman that has fared—but I say
no more!

WIFE. Ah, my middle!
I pray to God so mild,
If ever I you beguiled,
That I eat this child
That lies in this cradle.

MAK. Peace, woman, for God's pain,
and cry not so:

Thou spills thy brain, and makes me
full woe.

2 SHEP. I trow our sheep be slain.
What find ye two?

3 SHEP. All work we in vain; as well
may we go.

But, hatters,¹⁵⁶

I can find no flesh,

Hard nor nesh,¹⁵⁷

Salt nor fresh,

But two toom¹⁵⁸ platters:

Quick¹⁵⁹ cattle but this, tame nor
wild,

None, as have I bliss, as loud as he
smiled.

WIFE. No, so God me bless, and give
me joy of my child!

1 SHEP. We have marked amiss; I
hold us beguiled.

2 SHEP. Sir, done!

Sir, Our Lady him save!

Is your child a knave?¹⁶⁰

MAK. Any lord might him have,
This child to his son.

When he wakens he kips,¹⁶¹ that joy
is to see.

3 SHEP. In good time to his hips, and
in seel!¹⁶²

But who were his gossips,¹⁶³ so soon
ready?

MAK. So fair fall their lips!

1 SHEP. Hark now, a lie!

MAK. So God them thank,
Parkin, and Gibbon Waller, I say,
And gentle John Horne, in good
fay,¹⁶⁴

He made all the garray,¹⁶⁵

With the great shank.¹⁶⁶

2 SHEP. Mak, friends will we be, for
we are all one.

MAK. We!¹⁶⁷ now I hold for me, for
amends get I none.

Farewell all threel! all glad were ye
gone.

[*They leave the house.*]

3 SHEP. Fair words may there be, but
love is there none •

This year.

1 SHEP. Gave ye the child anything?

2 SHEP. I trow, not one farthing.

3 SHEP. Fast again will I fling,
Abide ye me there.

[*He returns to the house.*]

Mak, take it to no grief, if I come
to thy bairn.

MAK. Nay, thou does me great re-
prief,¹⁶⁸ and foul has thou farèd.

3 SHEP. The child will it not grieve,
that little day-star.

Mak, with your leave, let me give
your bairn

But sixpence.

MAK. Nay, do way:¹⁶⁹ he sleeps.

3 SHEP. Methink he peeps.

MAK. When he wakens he weeps:
I pray you go hence.

[*FIRST and SECOND
SHEPHERDS return.*]

3 SHEP. Give me leave him to kiss,
and lift up the clout.

What the devil is this? He has a
long snout!

¹⁶¹ snatches. ¹⁶² good luck to him!

¹⁶³ godparents. ¹⁶⁴ faith. ¹⁶⁵ commotion.

¹⁶⁶ long legs. ¹⁶⁷ an exclamation.

¹⁶⁸ injury. ¹⁶⁹ have done, quit.

¹⁵⁴ faint. ¹⁵⁶ house (pl. in text).

¹⁵⁵ an exclamation. ¹⁵⁷ soft.

¹⁵⁸ empty. ¹⁵⁹ living. ¹⁶⁰ boy.

1 SHEP. He is marked amiss. We wait ill about.

2 SHEP. Ill spun weft, I wis, ay comes foul out.

Aye, so?

He is like to our sheep!

3 SHEP. How, Gib, may I peep?

1 SHEP. I trow, kind¹⁷⁰ will creep
Where it may not go.¹⁷¹

2 SHEP. This was a quaint gaud,¹⁷²
and a far cast;
It was a high fraud.

3 SHEP. Yea, sirs; was 't.
Let burn this bawd, and bind her fast.

A false scold hangs at the last;
So shall thou.

Will ye see how they swaddle
His four feet in the middle?

Saw I never in a cradle

A horned lad ere now.

MAK. Peace, bid I! What, let be your fare!

I am he that him gat, and yond woman him bare.

1 SHEP. What devil shall he hight,¹⁷³
Mak? Lo, God, Mak's heir!

2 SHEP. Let be all that. Now God give him care,
I say.

WIFE. A pretty child is he,
As sits on a woman's knee;
A dilly-down, pardie,
To gar¹⁷⁴ a man laugh.

3 SHEP. I know him by the ear-mark
—that is a good token

MAK. I tell you, sirs, hark, his nose was broken.

Sithen¹⁷⁵ told me a clerk that he was
forspoken.¹⁷⁶

1 SHEP. This is a false work—I would
fain be wroken:¹⁷⁷
Get a weapon!

WIFE. He was taken by an elf,¹⁷⁸
I saw it myself;
When the clock struck twelve,
Was he forshapen.¹⁷⁹

2 SHEP. Ye two are well feoffed
sam¹⁸⁰ in a stead.

1 SHEP. Since they maintain their
theft, let do them to dead.¹⁸¹

MAK. If I trespass eft, gird¹⁸² off my
head!

With you will I be left.¹⁸³

1 SHEP. Sirs, do my rede:
For this trespass,
We will neither ban nor flyte¹⁸⁴
Fight nor chide,
But have done as tight,
And cast him in canvas.
[*They toss MAK in a sheet.*]

SCENE VII.

[*The Fields.*]

1 SHEP. Lord, what! I am sore, in
point for to burst;
In faith, I may no more; therefore
will I rest.

2 SHEP. As a sheep of seven score he
weighed in my fist.
For to sleep anywhere, methink that
I list.

3 SHEP. Now I pray you,
Lie down on this green.

1 SHEP. On these thieves yet I
mean.¹⁸⁵

3 SHEP. Whereto should ye tene?¹⁸⁶
Do as I say you.

[*An ANGEL sings "Gloria in Excelsis"; then let him say:—*]

Rise, herdmen hend,¹⁸⁷ for now is he
born

That shall take from the fiend
that¹⁸⁸ Adam had lorn:

¹⁷⁸ i.e. by the fairies, and a changeling substituted.

¹⁷⁹ changed in shape. ¹⁸⁰ agreed together.

¹⁸¹ have them put to death. ¹⁸² strike.

¹⁸³ I shall be in your power.

¹⁸⁴ curse nor wrangle.

¹⁸⁵ consider. ¹⁸⁶ grieve.

¹⁸⁷ gracious. ¹⁸⁸ that which.

¹⁷⁰ nature.

¹⁷¹ walk; this was a common proverb, here signifying that nature will show itself in its true colors.

¹⁷² trick.

¹⁷³ be named.

¹⁷⁴ make.

¹⁷⁵ afterwards.

¹⁷⁶ bewitched.

¹⁷⁷ revenged.

That warlock¹⁸⁹ to shend,¹⁹⁰ this
night is he born.
God is made your friend now at this
morn.

He behests¹⁹¹
To Bedlem¹⁹² go see,
There lies that free¹⁹³
In a crib full poorly.
Betwixt two beasts.

1 SHEP. This was a quaint steven¹⁹⁴
that ever yet I heard.
It is a marvel to neven,¹⁹⁵ thus to be
scared.

2 SHEP. Of God's son of heaven, he
spake upward.
All the wood in a levin,¹⁹⁶ methought
that he gard¹⁹⁷
Appear.

3 SHEP. He spake of a bairn
In Bedlem, I you warn.

1 SHEP. That betokens yond star;
Let us seek him there.

2 SHEP. Say, what was his song?
Heard ye not how he cracked it,
Three breves to a long¹⁹⁸

3 SHEP. Yea, marry, he hacked¹⁹⁹ it.
Was no crochet wrong, nor nothing
that lacked it.

1 SHEP. For to sing us among, right
as he knacked²⁰⁰ it,
I can.

2 SHEP. Let see how ye croon.
Can ye bark at the moon?

3 SHEP. Hold your tongues, have
done!

1 SHEP. Hark after, then.

2 SHEP. To Bedlem he bade that we
should gang;²⁰¹
I am full feared that we tarry too
long.

3 SHEP. Be merry and not sad; of
mirth is our song,
Everlasting glad to meed may we
fang²⁰²
Without noise.

¹⁸⁹ fiend. ¹⁹⁰ overthrow. ¹⁹¹ commands.

¹⁹² Bethlehem. ¹⁹³ noble (child). ¹⁹⁴ voice.

¹⁹⁵ name. ¹⁹⁶ in a flash of lightning.

¹⁹⁷ made.

¹⁹⁸ three short notes to one long note.

¹⁹⁹ gang. ²⁰⁰ trilled. ²⁰¹ go.

²⁰² everlasting gladness may we take as our
reward.

1 SHEP. Hie we thither forthy,²⁰³
If we be wet and weary,
To that child and that lady:
We have it not to lose.

2 SHEP. We find by the prophecy—
let be your din!—
Of David and Isaiah, and more than
I mind,
They prophesied by clergy, that in
a virgin
Should he light and lie, to slocken²⁰⁴
our sin

And slake it,
Our kind from woe;
For Isaiah said so,
Ecce virgo

Concipiet a child that is
naked.

3 SHEP. Full glad may we be and
abide that day,
That lovely to see that all mights
may.²⁰⁵
Lord, well were me for once and for
ay,
Might I kneel on my knee some word
for to say

To that child.
But the angel said
In a crib was he laid,
He was poorly arrayed,
Both meek²⁰⁶ and mild.

1 SHEP. Patriarchs that have been,
and prophets before,
They desired to have seen this child
that is born.
They are gone full clean; that have
they lorn.
We shall see him, I ween, ere it be
morn,

To token.²⁰⁷
When I see him and feel,
Then wot I full well
It is true as steel

That prophets have spoken:

²⁰³ therefore.

²⁰⁴ do away with.

²⁰⁵ to see that lovely one that shall have all
power.

²⁰⁶ MS. *mener*; Kittredge's emendation.

²⁰⁷ for evidence.

To so poor as we are that he would
appear,
First find, and declare by his mes-
senger.

2 SHEP. Go we now, let us fare; the
place is us near.

3 SHEP. I am ready and yare,²⁰⁸ go
we in fere²⁰⁹

To that bright.²¹⁰

Lord, if thy will it be,
We are lewd,²¹¹ all three;
Thou grant us somekind glee,
To comfort thy wight.

SCENE VIII.

[*The Stable in Bethlehem.*]

1 SHEP. Hail, comely and clean! hail,
young child!
Hail, Maker, as I mean, of a maiden
so mild!

Thou hast waried,²¹² I ween, the war-
lock so wild,

The false guiler of teen,²¹³ now goes
he beguiled.

Lo, he merries!²¹⁴

Lo, he laughs, my sweeting!

A welfare²¹⁵ meeting!

I have holden my highting.²¹⁶

Have a bob of cherries!

2 SHEP. Hail, sovereign savior, for
thou has us sought!

Hail, freely²¹⁷ food²¹⁸ and flower,
that all-thing has wrought!

Hail, full of favor, that made all of
nought!

Hail! I kneel and I cower. A bird
have I brought

To my bairn.

Hail, little tiny mop,²¹⁹

Of our creed thou art crop!²²⁰

I would drink in thy cup,

Little day-star!

3 SHEP. Hail, darling dear, full of god-
head!

I pray thee be near, when that I have
need.

Hail! sweet is thy cheer! My heart
would bleed

To see thee sit here in so poor weed,
With no pennies.

Hail! put forth thy dall!²²¹

I bring thee but a ball;

Have and play thee with all,

And go to the tennis.

MARY. The Father of Heaven, God
omnipotent,

That set all on seven,²²² his son has
he sent.

My name could he neven,²²³ and
alighted ere he went,

I conceived him full even, through
might, as he meant;

And now he is born.

He keep you from woe!

I shall pray him so;

Tell forth as ye go,

And mind on this morn.

1 SHEP. Farewell, lady, so fair to be-
hold,

With thy child on thy knee.

2 SHEP. But he lies full cold.

Lord, well is me! now we go, thou
behold.

3 SHEP. Forsooth, already it seems to
be told

Full oft.

1 SHEP. What grace we have found!

2 SHEP. Come forth, now are we
won.²²⁴

3 SHEP. To sing are we bound:

Let take on loft.²²⁵

* [Exeunt.]

²⁰⁸ prepared. ²⁰⁹ together.

²¹⁰ supply "one" or "child." ²¹¹ ignorant.

²¹² banned. ²¹³ woe. ²¹⁴ is merry.

²¹⁵ happy. ²¹⁶ kept my promise. ²¹⁷ noble.

²¹⁸ child (that which is fed).

²¹⁹ moppet, darling. ²²⁰ flower.

²²¹ hand.

²²² completed the work of creation in seven
days.

²²³ did he name. ²²⁴ successful in our quest.

²²⁵ let it ring on high.

ABRAHAM AND ISAAC

BROME PLAY

CHARACTERS

ABRAHAM.
ISAAC.
GOD.
AN ANGEL.
DOCTOR.

[*Enter ABRAHAM and ISAAC.*]

AB. Father of Heaven, omnipotent,
With all my heart to thee I call;
Thou hast given me both land and
rent,
And my livelihood thou hast me sent;
I thank thee highly evermore for
all.

First of the earth thou madest Adam,
And Eve also to be his wife;
All other creatures of them two
came;
And now thou hast granted to me,
Abraham,
Here in this land to lead my life.

In mine age thou hast granted me
this,
That this young child with me
shall won;¹
I love nothing so much, I wis,²
Except thine own self, dear Father of
bliss,
As Isaac here, my own sweet son.

I have divers children mo,
The which I love not half so well;
This fair sweet child he cheers me so,
In every place where that I go,
That no disease³ here may I feel.

And therefore, Father of Heaven, I
thee pray
For his health and also for his
grace;

¹ dwell. ² certainly. ³ dis-ease, trouble.

Now, Lord, keep him both night and
day,
That never disease nor no fray
Come to my child in no place.

Now come on, Isaac, my own sweet
child,

Go we home and take our rest.

Is. Abraham, mine own father so mild,
To follow you I am full prest,⁴

Both early and late.

AB. Come on, sweet child, I love thee
best

Of all the children that ever I
begat.

[*God speaks from above.*]

DEUS. Mine angel, fast hie thee thy
way,
And unto middle-earth⁵ anon thou
go.

Abraham's heart now will I assay,
Whether that he be steadfast or no.

Say I commanded him for to take
Isaac, his young son, that he loves
so well,
And with his blood sacrifice he make,
If any of my friendship he will
feel.

Show him the way unto the hill
There that his sacrifice shall be.
I shall assay now his good will,
Whether he loveth better his child
or me.

All men shall take example by him
My commandments how they shall
keep.

AB. Now, Father of Heaven, that
formed all things,
My prayers I make to thee again,

⁴ ready. ⁵ the world.

For this day my tender offering
 Here must I give to thee, certain.
 Ah, Lord God, Almighty King,
 What manner⁶ best will make
 thee most fain?

If I had thereof very knowing,
 It should be done with all my main
 Full soon anon.
 To do thy pleasure on a hill,
 Verily, it is my will,
 Dear Father, God in Trinity!

[Enter ANGEL.]

ANG. Abraham, Abraham, will thou
 rest!

Our Lord commandeth thee for to
 take

Isaac, thy young son, that thou
 lovest best,

And with his blood sacrifice that
 thou make.

Into the land of Vision thou go,
 And offer thy child unto thy Lord;
 I shall thee lead and show also.

Unto God's hest,⁷ Abraham, ac-
 cord,

And follow me upon this green!

AB. Welcome to me be my Lord's
 sand,⁸

And his hest I will not withstand;
 Yet Isaac, my young son in land

A full dear child to me hath been!

I had liefer, if God had been pleased,
 For to have forborne all the good
 that I have,

Than [that] Isaac, my son, should
 have been diseased,

So God in heaven my soul may
 save!

I loved never thing so much on earth,
 And now I must the child go kill!

Ah, Lord God, my conscience is
 strongly stirred,

And yet, my dear Lord, I am sore
 afeared

To grutch⁹ anything against your
 will.

I love my child as my life,
 But yet I love my God much more;
 For though my heart would make
 any strife,
 Yet will I not spare for child nor
 wife,
 But do after my Lord's lore.¹⁰

Though I love my son never so well,
 Yet smite off his head soon I shall.
 Ah, Father of Heaven, to thee I
 kneel,
 A hard death my son shall feel,
 For to honor thee, Lord, withal!

ANG. Abraham, Abraham, this is well
 said,

And all these commandments look
 that thou keep;

But in thy heart be nothing dis-
 mayed.

AB. Nay, nay, forsooth! I hold me
 well pleased

To please my God to the best that
 I have.

For though my heart be heavily set
 To see the blood of my own dear
 son,

Yet for all this I will not let.

But Isaac, my son, I will go fet,¹¹

And come as fast as ever we can.

[Exit ANGEL.]

Now, Isaac, my own son dear,
 Where art thou, child? Speak to
 me.

Is. My fair sweet father, I am here,
 And make my prayers to the
 Trinity.

AB. Rise up, my child, and fast come
 hither,

My gentle bairn that art so wise,
 For we two, child, must go together,
 And unto my Lord make sacrifice.

Is. I am full ready, my father, lo!
 Given to your hands, I stand right
 here,

And whatsoever ye bid me do,
 It shall be done with glad cheer,
 Full well and fine.

¹⁰ bidding.

¹¹ fetch.

⁶ i.e. of offering.

⁸ sending, message

⁷ command.

⁹ begrudge.

AB. Ah, Isaac, my own son so dear,
God's blessing I give thee, and
mine.

Hold this fagot upon thy back,
And here myself fire shall bring.

Is. Father, all this here will I pack,
I am full fain to do your bidding.

AB. Ah, Lord of Heaven, my hands I
wring,
This child's words all to-wound¹²
my heart!

Now, Isaac, son, go we our way
Unto yon mount, with all our main.

Is. Go we, my dear father, as fast as
I may;
To follow you I am full fain,
Although I be slender.

AB. Ah, Lord, my heart breaketh in
twain,
This child's words, they be so
tender!

Ah, Isaac son, anon lay it down,
No longer upon thy back it hold,
For I must make ready boon¹³
To honor my Lord God as I should.

Is. Lo, my dear father, where it is!
To cheer you, alway I draw me
near.

But, father, I marvel sore at this,
Why that ye make this heavy
cheer;

And also, father, ever more dread I:
Where is your quick¹⁴ beast that
ye should kill?

Both fire and wood we have ready,
But quick beast have we none on
this hill.

A quick beast, I wot well, must be
dead,
Your sacrifice for to make.

AB. Dread thee nought, my child, I
thee rede;¹⁵

Our Lord will send me unto this
stead¹⁶

Some manner of beast for to take,
Through his sweet sand.

Is. Yea, father, but my heart begin-
neth to quake
To see that sharp sword in
your hand.

Why bear ye your sword drawn so?
Of your countenance I have much
wonder.

AB. Ah, Father of Heaven, so I am
woe!
This child here breaks my heart in
sunder.

Is. Tell me, my dear father, ere that
ye cease,
Bear ye your sword drawn for me?

AB. Ah, Isaac, sweet son, peace,
peace!
For, iwis, thou break my heart in
three!

Is. Now truly, somewhat, father, ye
think,
That ye mourn thus more and more.

AB. Ah, Lord of Heaven, thy grace let
sink,
For my heart was never half so sore!

Is. I pray you, father, that ye will let
me that wit,¹⁷
Whether shall I have any harm or
no.

AB. Iwis, sweet son, I may not tell
thee yet,
My heart is now so full of woe.

Is. Dear father, I pray you, hide it
not from me,
But some of your thought that ye
tell me.

AB. Ah, Isaac, Isaac, I must kill thee!
Is. Kill me, father? Alas, what have
I done?

If I have trespassed against you
aught,
With a yard¹⁸ ye may make me
full mild,

And with your sharp sword kill me
not,
For iwis, father, I am but a child.

¹⁷ know.

¹⁸ rod.

¹² to has an intensive force; wound sorely.
¹³ prayer. ¹⁴ live. ¹⁵ counsel. ¹⁶ place.

AB. I am full sorry, son, thy blood for
to spill,
But truly, my child, I may not
choose.

Is. Now I would to God my mother
were here on this hill!

She would kneel for me on both
her knees

To save my life.

And sithen ¹⁹ that my mother is not
here,

I pray you, father, change your cheer,
And kill me not with your
knife.

AB. Forsooth, son, but if ²⁰ I thee kill,
I should grieve God right sore, I
dread;

It is his commandment and also his
will

That I should do this same deed.

He commanded me, son, for certain,
To make my sacrifice with thy
blood.

Is. And is it God's will that I should
be slain?

AB. Yea, truly, Isaac, my son so good,
And therefore my hands I wring!

Is. Now, father, against my Lord's
will

I will never grutch, loud nor still.

He might have sent me a better
destiny,

If it had been his will.²¹

AB. Forsooth, son, but if I did this
deed,

Grievously displeased our Lord will
be.

Is. Nay, nay, father, God forbid
That ever ye should grieve him for
me!

Ye have other children, one or two

The which you love well by kind.²²

I pray you, father, make ye no woe,
For be I once dead and from you
gone,

I shall be soon out of your mind.

Therefore do our Lord's bidding,
And when I am dead, then pray
for me.

But, good father, tell ye my mother
nothing,

Say that I am in another country
dwelling.

AB. Ah, Isaac, Isaac, blessed may thou
be!

My heart beginneth strongly to rise
To see the blood of thy blessed
body!

Is. Father, since it may be no other
wise,

Let it pass over, as well as I.

But, father, ere I go unto my death,
I pray you bless me with your
hand.

AB. Now, Isaac, with all my breath,
My blessing I give thee upon this
land,

And, God's also thereto, iwis.

Isaac, Isaac, son, up thou stand,
Thy fair sweet mouth that I may
kiss.

Is. Now farewell, my own father so
fine,

And greet well my mother on
earth.

But I pray you, father, to hide my
eyne,²³

That I see not the stroke of your
sharp sword

That my flesh shall defile.

AB. Son, thy words make me to weep
full sore—

Now, my dear son Isaac, speak no
more.

Is. Ah, my own dear father, where-
fore?

We shall speak together here but
a while.

And sithen that I must needs be
dead,

Yet, my dear father, to you I pray,
Smite but few strokes at my head,

And make an end as soon as ye
may,

And tarry not too long.

¹⁹ since.

²⁰ unless.

²¹ will is Manly's emendation; MS. plecer.

²² nature.

²³ eyes.

AB. Thy meek words, child, make me
afraid;
So "welawey!"²⁴ may be my
song,

Except alone God's will.

Ah, Isaac, my own sweet child,
Yet kiss me again upon this hill!
In all this world is none so mild.

Is. Now truly, father, all this tarry-
ing,
It doth my heart but harm;

I pray you, father, make an ending.

AB. Come up, sweet son, into my arm.

I must bind thy hands two,
Although thou be never so mild.

Is. Ah, mercy, father! Why should
ye do so?

AB. That thou should'st not let,²⁵ my
child.

Is. Nay, iwis, father, I will not let
you;

Do on, for me, your will,
And on the purpose that ye have set
you,
For God's love, keep it forth still.

I am full sorry this day to die,
But yet I keep²⁶ not my God to
grieve.

Do on your list²⁷ for me hardily,
My fair sweet father, I give you
leave.

But, father, I pray you evermore,
Tell ye my mother no deal;²⁸
If she wist it, she would weep full
sore,
For iwis, father, she loveth me full
well;
God's blessing may she have!

Now farewell, my mother so sweet,

We two be like no more to meet,

AB. Ah, Isaac, Isaac, son, thou makest
me to greet,²⁹

And with thy words thou distem-
perest me.

Is. Iwis, sweet father, I am sorry to
grieve you;

I cry you mercy for that I have
done,

And for all trespass that ever I did
move you;

Now, dear father, forgive me that
I have done.

God of Heaven be with me!

AB. Ah, dear child, leave off thy
moans,

In all thy life thou grieved me never
once;

Now blessed be thou, body and bones,
That ever thou were bred and
born!

Thou hast been to me child full good.

But iwis, child, though I mourn
never so fast,

Yet must I needs here at the last
In this place shed all thy blood.

Therefore, my dear son, here shall
thou lie.

Unto my work I must me stead;³⁰

Iwis, I had as lief myself to die—

If God will be pleased with my
deed—

And mine own body for to offer!

Is. Ah, mercy, father! mourn ye no
more.

Your weeping maketh my heart sore
As my own death that I shall
suffer.

Your kerchief, father, about my eyes
ye wind.

AB. So I shall, my sweetest child on
earth.

Is. Now yet, good father, have this in
mind,

And smite me not often with your
sharp sword,

But hastily that it be sped.

[Here ABRAHAM laid a cloth on
ISAAC's face, thus saying:]

AB. Now, farewell, my child, so full of
grace.

Is. Ah, father, father, turn downward
my face!

For of your sharp sword I am ever
adread.

²⁴ an exclamation of grief. ²⁵ hinder.

²⁶ wish. ²⁷ pleasure. ²⁸ nothing. ²⁹ weep.

³⁰ address.

AB. To do this deed I am full sorry,
But, Lord, thine hest I will not with-stand.

Is. Ah, Father of Heaven, to thee I cry;
Lord, receive me into thy hand!

AB. Lo, now is the time come certain
That my sword in his neck shall bite.

Ah, Lord, my heart riseth there-against,
I may not find it in my heart to smite!

My heart will not now thereto!
Yet fain I would work my Lord's will,

But this innocent lieth so still,
I may not find it in my heart him to kill—

O Father of Heaven, what shall I do!

Is. Ah, mercy, father, why tarry ye so,
And let me lie thus long on this heath?

Now I would to God the stroke were done!

Father, I pray you heartily, short me of my woe,
And let me not look thus after my death.

AB. Now, heart, why wouldst not thou break in three?

Yet shall thou not make me to my God unmild.

I will no longer let for thee,
For that my God aggrieved would be.
Now hold the stroke, my own dear child.

[*Here ABRAHAM drew his stroke, and the ANGEL took the sword in his hand suddenly.*]

ANG I am an angel, thou mayest see blithe,

That from heaven to thee is sent.

Our Lord thanketh thee a hundred sithes ³¹

For the keeping of his commandment.

³¹ times.

He knoweth thy will and also thy heart,

That thou drest him above all thing

And some of thy heaviness for to depart,³²

A fair ram yonder I gan ³³ bring;

He standeth tied, lo, among the briars.

Now, Abraham, amend thy mood,
For Isaac, thy young son, that here is,

This day shall not shed his blood.

Go, make thy sacrifice with yon ram,
Now farewell, blessed Abraham,

For unto heaven I go now home:

The way is full gain.³⁴

Take up thy son so free!

[*Exit ANGEL.*]

AB. Ah, Lord, I thank thee for thy great grace,

Now am I eased ³⁵ in divers wise.

Arise, Isaac, my dear son, arise,

Arise up, sweet child, and come to me!

Is. Ah, mercy, father, why smite ye not?

Ah, smite on, father, once with your knife!

AB. Peace, my sweet son, and take no thought,

For our Lord of Heaven hath granted thy life

By his angel now,

That thou shalt not die this day, son, truly.

Is. Ah, father, full glad then were I,
Iwis, father, I say, iwis,

If this tale were true!

AB. A hundred times, my son fair of hue,

For joy thy mouth now will I kiss.

Is. Ah, my dear father Abraham,
Will not God be wroth that we do thus?

³² remove. ³³ did. ³⁴ straight.

³⁵ Manly's emendation; MS. *yeyed*.

AB. No, no, hardily, my sweet son! for
yon same ram
He hath sent hither down to us.³⁶

Yon beast shall die here in thy stead,
In the worship of our Lord alone;
Go fet him hither, my child, indeed.
Is. Father, I will go hent³⁷ him by the
head,
And bring yon beast with me anon.

Ah, sheep, sheep, blessed may thou
be,
That ever thou were sent down
hither!

Thou shall this day die for me,
In the worship of the Holy Trinity.
Now come fast and go we together,
To my father of Heaven.

Though thou be never so gentle and
good,
Yet had I liefer thou sheddest thy
blood,
Iwis, sheep, than I!

Lo, father, I have brought here, full
smart,
This gentle sheep, and him to you
I give,

But, Lord God, I thank thee with all
my heart,
For I am glad that I shall live,
And kiss once my dear mother.

AB. Now be right merry, my sweet
child,
For this quick beast that is so mild
Here I shall present before all
other.

Is. And I will fast begin to blow,
This fire shall burn a full good
speed,

But, father, will I stoop down low,
Ye will not kill me with your sword,
I trow?

AB. No, hardily, sweet son, have no
dread,
My mourning is past.

Is. Yea, but I would that sword were
in a glee³⁸,
For, iwis, father, it makes me
full ill aghast.

[Here ABRAHAM made his offering,
kneeling and saying thus:]

AB. Now, Lord God of Heaven in
Trinity,
Almighty God omnipotent,
My offering I make in the worship of
thee,
And with this quick beast I thee
present.
Lord, receive thou mine intent,
As [thou] art God and ground of
our grace.

DEUS. Abraham, Abraham, well may
thou speed,
And Isaac, thy young son, thee
by!
Truly, Abraham, for this deed,
I shall multiply both your seed,
As thick as stars be in the sky,
Both more and less,
And as thick as gravel in the sea,
So thick multiplied your seed shall
be:
This grant I you for your good-
ness.

Of you shall come fruit great,
And ever be in bliss without end,
For ye dread me, as God alone,
And keep my commandments every
one;
My blessing I give, wheresoever ye
wend!

AB. Lo, Isaac, my son, how think ye
Of this work that we have
wrought?

Full glad and blithe we may be,
Against the will of God that we
grutched not,
Upon this fair heath.

Is. Ah, father, I thank our Lord every
deal,
That my wit served me so well
For to dread God more than my
death.

AB. Why, dearworthy son, were thou
adread?
Hardily, child, tell me thy lore.

³⁶ line arrangement according to Manly.

³⁷ seize. ³⁸ fire.

Is. Yea, by my faith, father, now have
I rede,³⁹
I was never so afraid before,
As I have been on yon hill.
But, by my faith, father, I swear
I will nevermore come there,
But it be against my will!

Ab. Yea, come on with me, my own
sweet son,

And homeward fast now let us go.

Is. By my faith, father, thereto I
grant;

I had never so good will to go home,
And to speak with my dear mother!

Ab. Ah, Lord of Heaven, I thank thee!
For now may I lead home with me
Isaac, my young son so free,
The gentlest child above all other,
This may I well avow.

Now, go we forth, my blessed son.

Is. I grant, father, and let us go,
For, by my troth, were I at home,
I would never go out under that
form.⁴⁰

I pray God give us grace evermo,
And all those that we be holden to.
[*Exeunt.*]

[*Enter Doctor.*]

Doc.⁴¹ Lo, sovereigns and sirs, now
have we showed

This solemn story to great and
small;

It is good learning to learned and
lewd,⁴²

And the wisest of us all,

Without any berring.⁴³

For this story shows you [here]

³⁹ judgment.

⁴⁰ in that manner, for that purpose.

⁴¹ A Doctor, or Expositor, frequently accompanied the miracle and morality plays to expound the moral teaching.

⁴² ignorant. ⁴³ barring, exception.

How we should keep to our power
God's commandments without
grutching.⁴⁴

Trow ye, sirs, and God sent an angel
And commanded you your child to
slay,

By your troth, is there any of you
That either would grutch or strive
there-against?

How think ye now, sirs, thereby?
I trow there be three or four or
mo.⁴⁵

And these women that weep so sorrowfully

When that their children die
them from

As nature will and kind,—⁴⁶

It is but folly, I may well
avow,

To grutch against God or to
grieve you,

For ye shall never see Him mis-
chieved,⁴⁷ well I know,

By land nor water, have this
in mind;

And grutch not against our Lord God
In wealth or woe, whether ⁴⁸ that
he you send,

Though ye be never so hard bestead;
For when he will, he may it amend,

His commandments truly if ye keep
with good heart,

As this story hath now showed you
beforen,⁴⁹

And faithfully serve him while ye be
quart,⁵⁰

That ye may please God both even
and morn.

Now Jesu, that wore the crown of
thorn,

Bring us all to heavenly bliss!

⁴⁴ ungrudgingly.

⁴⁵ more.

⁴⁶ nature.

⁴⁷ harmed.

⁴⁸ which of the two.

⁴⁹ before.

⁵⁰ alive, in health.

THE MORAL PLAY OF EVERYMAN

CHARACTERS

GOD.
DEATH.
EVERYMAN.
FELLOWSHIP.
KINDRED.
COUSIN.
GOODS.
GOOD DEEDS.
KNOWLEDGE.
CONFESSION.
BEAUTY.
STRENGTH.
DISCRETION.
FIVE-WITS.
ANGEL.
MESSENGER.
DOCTOR.

Here beginneth a treatise how the High Father of Heaven sendeth Death to summon every creature to come and give account of their lives in this world and is in manner of a moral play.

MESSENGER. I pray you all give your audience,
And hear this matter with reverence,
By figure¹ a moral play:
The *Summoning of Everyman* called it is,
That of our lives and ending shows
How transitory we be all day.
This matter is wondrous precious,
But the intent of it is more gracious,
And sweet to bear away.
The story saith:—Man, in the beginning,
Look well, and take good heed to the ending,
Be you never so gay;
Ye think sin in the beginning full sweet,
Which in the end causeth the soul to weep,
When the body lieth in clay.

¹ in form.

Here shall you see how Fellowship
and Jollity,
Both Strength, Pleasure, and Beauty,
Will fade from thee as flower in May.
For ye shall hear, how our heaven king
Calleth Everyman to a general reckoning:
Give audience, and hear what he doth say.

[God *speaketh*.]

GOD. I perceive here in my majesty,
How that all creatures be to me unkind,
Living without dread in worldly prosperity;
Of ghostly² sight the people be so blind,
Drowned in sin, they know me not for their God;
In worldly riches is all their mind.
They fear not my righteousness, the sharp rod;
My law that I showed, when I for them died,
They forget clean, and shedding of my blood red;
I hanged between two, it cannot be denied;
To get them life I suffered to be dead;
I healed their feet, with thorns hurt was my head;
I could do no more than I did truly.
And now I see the people do clean forsake me:
They use the seven deadly sins damnable,
As pride, covetise, wrath, and lechery,
Now in the world be made commendable,

² spiritual.

And thus they leave of angels the
heavenly company;
Every man liveth so after his own
pleasure,
And yet of their life they be nothing
sure.

I see the more that I them forbear
The worse they be from year to year;
All that liveth appaireth³ fast;
Therefore I will in all the haste
Have a reckoning of every man's
person.

For and⁴ I leave the people thus
alone

In their life and wicked tempests,
Verily they will become much worse
than beasts,

For now one would by envy another
up eat;

Charity they all do clean forget.

I hoped well that every man
In my glory should make his man-
sion,

And thereto I had them all elect;
But now I see, like traitors deject,
They thank me not for the pleasure
that I to them meant,

Nor yet for their being that I them
have lent.

I proffered the people great multitude
of mercy,

And few there be that ask it heartily;
They be so cumbered with worldly
riches,

That needs on them I must do jus-
tice,

On every man living without fear.

Where art thou, Death, thou mighty
messenger?

DEATH. Almighty God, I am here at
your will,

Your commandment to fulfil.

GOD. Go thou to Everyman,
And show him in my name
A pilgrimage he must on him take,
Which he in no wise may escape;
And that he bring with him a sure
reckoning

Without delay or any tarrying.

DEATH. Lord, I will in the world go
run over all,

And cruelly out-search both great
and small.

³ decays.

⁴ if.

Every man will I beset that liveth
beastly

Out of God's laws, and dreadeth not
folly.

He that loveth riches I will strike
with my dart,

His sight to blind, and from heaven
to depart,⁵

Except that alms be his good friend,
In hell for to dwell, world without
end.

Lo, yonder I see Everyman walking;
Full little he thinketh on my coming;
His mind is on fleshly lusts and his
treasure,

And great pain it shall cause him to
endure

Before the Lord, Heaven King.

[Enter EVERYMAN.]

Everyman, stand still! Whither art
thou going

Thus gaily? Hast thou thy Maker
forgot?

EVERY. Why askest thou?

Wouldest thou wit?⁶

DEATH. Yea, sir, I will show you;

In great haste I am sent to thee
From God, out of his majesty.

EVERY. What, sent to me?

DEATH. Yea, certainly.

Though thou have forgot him here.
He thinketh on thee in the heavenly
sphere,

As, ere we depart, thou shalt know.

EVERY. What desireth God of me?

DEATH. That shall I show thee:

A reckoning he will needs have,
Without any longer respite.

EVERY. To give a reckoning longer
leisure I crave;

This blind matter troubleth my wit.

DEATH. On thee thou must take a long
journey;

Therefore thy book of count with
thee thou bring,

For turn again thou can not by no
way;

And look thou be sure of thy reckon-
ing,

For before God thou shalt answer,
and show

⁵ separate.

⁶ know.

Thy many bad deeds and good but a few,
How thou hast spent thy life, and in what wise,
Before the chief lord of paradise.
Have ado that we were in that way,

For, wit thou well, thou shalt make none attorney.⁷

EVERY. Full unready I am such reckoning to give.

I know thee not; what messenger art thou?

DEATH. I am Death, that no man dreadeth.

For every man I rest,⁸ and no man spare;

For it is God's commandment
That all to me should be obedient.

EVERY. O Death, thou comest when I had thee least in mind!

In thy power it lieth me to save;

Yet of my good⁹ will I give thee, if thou will be kind,

Yea, a thousand pound shalt thou have,

And defer this matter till another day.

DEATH. Everyman, it may not be by no way.

I set not by gold, silver, nor riches,
Nor by pope, emperor, king, duke,
nor princes;

For and I would receive gifts great,

All the world I might get,

But my custom is clean contrary.

I give thee no respite; come hence, and not tarry.

EVERY. Alas, shall I have no longer respite?

I may say Death giveth no warning.
To think on thee, it maketh my heart sick,

For all unready is my book of reckoning,

But twelve year and I might have abiding,

My counting book I would make so clear,

That my reckoning I should not need to fear.

Wherefore, Death, I pray thee, for God's mercy,

Spare me till I be provided of remedy.

DEATH. Thee availeth not to cry, weep, and pray,

But haste thee lightly that thou were gone that journey,

And prove thy friends if thou can.

For, wit thou well, the tide abideth no man,

And in the world each living creature

For Adam's sin must die of nature.

EVERY. Death, if I should this pilgrimage take,

And my reckoning surely make,

Show me, for saint¹⁰ charity,

Should I not come again shortly?

DEATH. No, Everyman; and thou be once there,

Thou mayst never more come here,
Trust me verily.

EVERY. O gracious God, in the high seat celestial,

Have mercy on me in this most need!

Shall I have no company from this vale terrestrial

Of mine acquaintance that way me to lead?

DEATH. Yea, if any be so hardy,

That would go with thee and bear thee company.

Hie thee that thou were gone to God's magnificence,

Thy reckoning to give before his presence.

What, weenest thou thy life is given thee,

And thy worldly goods also?

EVERY. I had wend¹¹ so, verily.

DEATH. Nay, nay; it was but lent thee;

For as soon as thou art gone,

Another a while shall have it, and then go therefrom,

Even as thou hast done.

Everyman, thou art mad! Thou hast thy wits five,

And here on earth will not amend thy life!

For suddenly I do come.

EVERY. O wretched caitiff, whither shall I flee,

That I might scape this endless sorrow?

⁷ advocate.

⁸ arrest.

⁹ property.

¹⁰ holy.

¹¹ thought.

Now, gentle Death, spare me till to-morrow,
 That I may amend me
 With good advisement.
DEATH. Nay, thereto I will not consent,
 Nor no man will I respite;
 But to the heart suddenly I shall smite
 Without any advisement.
 And now out of thy sight I will me hie;
 See thou make thee ready shortly,
 For thou mayst say this is the day
 That no man living may scape away.
EVERY. Alas! I may well weep with sighs deep;
 Now have I no manner of company
 To help me in my journey, and me to keep;
 And also my writing is full unready.
 How shall I do now for to excuse me?
 I would to God I had never been gotten!
 To my soul a full great profit it had been,
 For now I fear pains huge and great.
 The time passeth; Lord, help, that all wrought!
 For though I mourn it availeth nought.
 The day passeth, and is almost agone;
 I wot not well what for to do.
 To whom were I best my complaint to make?
 What and I to Fellowship thereof spake,
 And showed him of this sudden chance?
 For in him is all mine affiance;¹²
 We have in the world so many a day
 Been good friends in sport and play.
 I see him yonder, certainly;
 I trust that he will bear me company;
 Therefore to him will I speak to ease my sorrow.
 Well met, good Fellowship, and good morrow!
FELLOWSHIP. Everyman, good morrow! By this day,
 Sir, why lookest thou so piteously?

¹² confidence.

If anything be amiss, I pray thee me say,
 That I may help to remedy.
EVERY. Yea, good Fellowship, yea, I am in great jeopardy.
FELLOW. My true friend, show to me your mind;
 I will not forsake thee, to my life's end,
 In the way of good company.
EVERY. That was well spoken, and lovingly.
FELLOW. Sir, I must needs know your heaviness;
 I have pity to see you in any distress.
 If any have you wronged ye shall revenged be,
 Though I on the ground be slain for thee,
 Though that I know before that I should die.
EVERY. Verily, Fellowship, gramercy.¹³
FELLOW. Tush! by thy thanks I set not a straw.
 Show me your grief, and say no more.
EVERY. If I my heart should to you break,
 And then you to turn your mind from me,
 And would not me comfort, when ye hear me speak,
 Then should I ten times sorrier be.
FELLOW. Sir, I say as I will do indeed.
EVERY. Then be you a good friend at need.
 I have found you true here before.
FELLOW. And so ye shall evermore;
 For, in faith, and thou go to hell,
 I will not forsake thee by the way.
EVERY. Ye speak like a good friend,
 I believe you well;
 I shall deserve it, and I may.
FELLOW. I speak of no deserving, by this day.
 For he that will say and nothing do
 Is not worthy with good company to go.
 Therefore show me the grief of your mind,
 As to your friend most loving and kind.
EVERY. I shall show you how it is:
 Commanded I am to go a journey,
¹³ thanks.

A long way, hard and dangerous,
And give a strait count without delay
Before the high judge Adonai.¹⁴

Wherefore I pray you, bear me company,

As ye have promised, in this journey.

FELLOW. That is matter indeed!

Promise is duty,

But and I should take such a voyage
on me,

I know it well, it should be to my
pain;

Also it makes me afeard, certain.

But let us take counsel here as well
as we can,

For your words would fear¹⁵ a strong
man.

EVERY. Why, ye said, if I had need,
Ye would me never forsake, quick¹⁶
nor dead,

Though it were to hell, truly.

FELLOW. So I said, certainly.

But such pleasures be set aside, the
sooth to say;

And also, if we took such a journey,
When should we come again?

EVERY. Nay, never again till the day
of doom.

FELLOW. In faith, then will not I come
there!

Who hath you these tidings brought?

EVERY. Indeed, Death was with me
here.

FELLOW. Now, by God that all hath
bought,

If Death were the messenger,
For no man that is living to-day
I will not go that loath¹⁷ journey—
Not for the father that begat me!

EVERY. Ye promised other wise,
pardie!¹⁸

FELLOW. I wot well I say so, truly;
And yet if thou wilt eat, and drink,
and make good cheer,

Or haunt to women the lusty com-
pany,

I would not forsake you while the
day is clear,

Trust me verily!

EVERY. Yea, thereto ye would be
ready;

To go to mirth, solace, and play,

Your mind will sooner apply,
Than to bear me company in my
long journey.

FELLOW. Now, in good faith, I will
not¹⁹ that way.

But and thou will murder, or any
man kill,

In that I will help thee with a good
will!

EVERY. Oh, that is a simple advice in-
deed!

Gentle Fellow, help me in my neces-
sity;

We have loved long, and now I
need;

And now, gentle Fellowship, remem-
ber me.

FELLOW. Whether ye have loved me
or no,

By Saint John, I will not with thee
go!

EVERY. Yet I pray thee, take the labor
and do so much for me

To bring me forward, for saint
charity,

And comfort me till I come without
the town.

FELLOW. Nay, and thou would give
me a new gown,

I will not a foot with thee go;

But and thou had tarried, I would
not have left thee so.

And as now, God speed thee in thy
journey!

For from thee I will depart as fast as
I may.

EVERY. Whither away, Fellowship?
will thou forsake me?

FELLOW. Yea, by my fay!²⁰ To God
I betake²¹ thee.

EVERY. Farewell, good Fellowship; for
thee my heart is sore.

Adieu for ever, I shall see thee no
more.

FELLOW. In faith, Everyman, farewell
now at the end;

For you I will remember that part-
ing is mourning.

EVERY. Alack! shall we thus depart
indeed?

Ah, Lady, help! without any more
comfort,

¹⁴ God. ¹⁶ frighten. ¹⁸ living.

¹⁷ loathsome. ¹⁹ *par Dieu*.

²⁰ have no desire.

²¹ faith.

²² commend.

Lo, Fellowship forsaketh me in my most need.
 For help in this world whither shall I resort?
 Fellowship herebefore with me would merry make,
 And now little sorrow for me doth he take.
 It is said, in prosperity men friends may find,
 Which in adversity be full unkind.
 Now whither for succor shall I flee,
 Sith ²² that Fellowship hath forsaken me?
 To my kinsmen I will truly,
 Praying them to help me in my necessity;
 I believe that they will do so,
 For kind ²³ will creep where it may not go.²⁴
 I will go say,²⁵ for yonder I see them go.
 Where be ye now, my friends and kinsmen?
 KINDRED. Here be we now at your commandment.
 Cousin, I pray you show us your intent
 In any wise, and not spare.
 COUSIN. Yea, Everyman, and to us declare
 If ye be disposed to go any whither,
 For wit you well, [we] will live and die together.
 KIN. In wealth and woe we will with you hold,
 For over his kin a man may be bold.
 EVERY. Gramercy, my friends and kinsmen kind;
 Now shall I show you the grief of my mind.
 I was commanded by a messenger,
 That is an high king's chief officer:
 He bade me go a pilgrimage to my pain,
 And I know well I shall never come again;
 Also I must give a reckoning strait,
 For I have a great enemy that hath me in wait,²⁶
 Which intendeth me for to hinder.

KIN. What account is that which ye must render?
 That would I know.
 EVERY. Of all my works I must show
 How I have lived and my days spent;
 Also of ill deeds, that I have used
 In my time, sith life was me lent;
 And of all virtues that I have refused.
 Therefore I pray you go thither with me,
 To help to make mine account, for saint charity.
 COUS. What, to go thither? Is that the matter?
 Nay, Everyman, I had liefer fast [on] bread and water .
 All this five year and more.
 EVERY. Alas, that ever I was born!
 For now shall I never be merry
 If that you forsake me.
 KIN. Ah, sir, what, ye be a merry man!
 Take good heart to you, and make no moan.
 But one thing I warn you, by Saint Anne,
 As for me, ye shall go alone.
 EVERY. My Cousin, will you not with me go?
 COUS. No, by our Lady! I have the cramp in my toe.
 Trust not to me, for, so God me speed,
 I will deceive you in your most need.
 KIN. It availeth not us to tice.²⁷
 Ye shall have my maid with all my heart;
 She loveth to go to feasts, there to be nice.²⁸
 And to dance, and abroad to start:
 I will give her leave to help you in that journey,
 If that you and she may agree.
 EVERY. Now show me the very effect of your mind;
 Will you go with me, or abide behind?
 KIN. Abide behind? yea, that will I and I may!
 Therefore farewell till another day.
 EVERY. How should I be merry or glad?

²² since. ²³ kinship. ²⁴ walk.
²⁵ assay, try. ²⁶ lies in wait for me.

²⁷ entice.

²⁸ wanton.

For fair promises men to me make,
But when I have most need, they
me forsake.

I am deceived; that maketh me sad.

Cous. Cousin Everyman, farewell
now,

For verily I will not go with you.

Also of mine own an unready reckon-
ing

I have to account; therefore I make
tarrying.

Now, God keep thee, for now I go.

EVERY. Ah, Jesus, is all come hereto?

Lo, fair words make fools fain;

They promise, and nothing will do
certain.

My kinsmen promised me faithfully

For to abide with me steadfastly,

And now fast away do they flee:

Even so Fellowship promised me.

What friend were best me of to pro-
vide?

I lose my time here longer to abide.

Yet in my mind a thing there is—

All my life I have loved riches;

If that my Good now help me might,

He would make my heart full light.

I will speak to him in this distress.—

Where art thou, my Goods and
Riches?

Goods. Who calleth me? Everyman?
what hast thou haste?

I lie here in corners, trussed and
piled so high,

And in chests I am locked so fast,

Also sacked in bags, thou mayest see
with thine eye,

I cannot stir; in packs low I lie.

What would ye have, lightly me say.

EVERY. Come hither, Good, in all the
haste thou may,

For of counsel I must desire thee.

Goods. Sir, and ye in the world have
sorrow or adversity,

That can I help you to remedy
shortly.

EVERY. It is another disease that
grieveth me;

In this world it is not, I tell thee so.

I am sent for another way to go,

To give a strait count general

Before the highest Jupiter²⁰ of all.

And all my life I have had joy and
pleasure in thee,

Therefore I pray thee go with me;

For, peradventure, thou mayst be-
fore God Almighty

My reckoning help to clean and
purify,

For it is said ever among,

That money maketh all right that
is wrong.

Goods. Nay, Everyman, I sing an-
other song,

I follow no man in such voyages;

For and I went with thee,

Thou shouldst fare much the worse
for me;

For because on me thou did set thy
mind,

Thy reckoning I have made blotted
and blind,

That thine account thou can not
make truly;

And that hast thou for the love of
me.

EVERY. That would grieve me full
sore,

When I should come to that fearful
answer.

Up, let us go thither together!

Goods. Nay, not so; I am too brittle,
I may not endure;

I will follow [no] man one foot, be
ye sure.

EVERY. Alas, I have thee loved, and
had great pleasure

All my life-days in good and
treasure.

Goods. That is to thy damnation
without lesing,³⁰

For my love is contrary to the love
everlasting.

But if thou had me loved moderately
during,³¹

As³² to the poor give part of
me,

Then shouldst thou not in this dolor
be,

Nor in this great sorrow and care.

EVERY. Lo, now was I deceived ere
I was ware,

And all I may wite³³ my spending
of time.

²⁰ a curious intrusion of the name of the
pagan deity.

³⁰ lying.

³² in such a way as.

³¹ for a while.

³³ blame to.

GOODS. What, weenest thou that I am thine?

EVERY. I had wend so.

GOODS. Nay, Everyman, I say no;
As for a while I was lent thee,
A season thou hast had me in prosperity.

My condition is man's soul to kill;
If I save one, a thousand I do spill,³⁴
Weenest thou that I will follow thee?
Nay, from this world not verily.

EVERY. I had wend otherwise.

GOODS. Therefore to thy soul Good is a thief;

For when thou art dead, this is my guise³⁵—

Another to deceive in the same wise
As I have done thee, and all to his soul's reprieve.³⁶

EVERY. O false Good, cursed thou be!
Thou traitor to God, that hast deceived me,

And caught me in thy snare.

GOODS. Marry, thou brought thyself in care,

Whereof I am glad,

I must needs laugh, I cannot be sad.

EVERY. Ah, Good, thou hast had long my heartily love;

I gave thee that which should be the Lord's above.

But wilt thou not go with me in deed?

I pray thee truth to say.

GOODS. No, so God me speed,
Therefore farewell, and have good day.

EVERY. Oh, to whom shall I make my moan

For to go with me in that heavy journey?

First Fellowship said he would with me go;

His words were very pleasant and gay,

But afterward he left me alone.

Then spake I to my kinsmen all in despair,

And also they gave me words fair,

They lacked no fair speaking,

But all forsake me in the ending.

Then went I to my Goods, that I loved best,

In hope to have comfort, but there had I least;

For my Goods sharply did me tell
That he bringeth many into hell.

Then of myself I was ashamed,

And so I am worthy to be blamed;

Thus may I well myself hate.

Of whom shall I now counsel take?

I think that I shall never speed
Till that I go to my Good-Deed.

But alas, she is so weak,

That she can neither go nor speak;

Yet will I venture on her now.—

My Good-Deeds, where be you?

GOOD-DEEDS. Here I lie, cold in the ground;

Thy sins have me sore bound,

That I cannot stir.

EVERY. O Good-Deeds, I stand in fear;

I must you pray of counsel,

For help now should come right well.

GOOD-D. Everyman, I have understanding

That ye be summoned account to make

Before Messias, of Jerusalem King;

And you do by me³⁷ that journey with you will I take.

EVERY. Therefore I come to you, my moan to make;

I pray you that ye will go with me.

GOOD-D. I would full fain, but I cannot stand, verily.

EVERY. Why, is there anything on you fallen?

GOOD-D. Yea, sir, I may thank you of all;³⁸

If ye had perfectly cheered³⁹ me,

Your book of count now full ready had been.

Look, the books of your works and deeds eke—

Ah, see how they lie under the feet,
To your soul's heaviness.

EVERY. Our Lord Jesus, help me!

For one letter here I can not see.

GOOD-D. There is a blind reckoning in time of distress!

EVERY. Good-Deeds, I pray you, help me in this need,

Or else I am for ever damned indeed.

³⁴ destroy. ³⁵ practice. ³⁶ reproof, shame.

³⁷ by my advice.

³⁸ for everything.

³⁹ cherished.

Therefore help me to make reckon-
ing

Before the redeemer of all thing,
That king is, and was, and ever shall.

GOOD-D. Everyman, I am sorry of
your fall,

And fain would I help you, and I
were able.

EVERY. Good-Deeds, your counsel I
pray you give me.

GOOD-D. That shall I do verily;

Though that on my feet I may not
go,

I have a sister; that shall with you
also,

Called Knowledge, which shall with
you abide,

To help you to make that dreadful
reckoning.

KNOWLEDGE. Everyman, I will go
with thee, and be thy guide,

In thy most need to go by thy side.

EVERY. In good condition I am now
in every thing,

And am wholly content with this
good thing;

Thanked be God my Creator!

GOOD-D. And when he hath brought
you there,

Where thou shalt heal thee of thy
smart,

Then go you with your reckoning
and your Good-Deeds together,

For to make you joyful at heart

Before the blessed Trinity.

EVERY. My Good-Deeds, gramercy;

I am well content, certainly,

With your words sweet.

KNOW. Now go we together lovingly,
To Confession, that cleansing river.

EVERY. For joy I weep; I would we
were there.

But, I pray you, give me cognition⁴⁰
Where dwelleth that holy man, Con-
fession.

KNOW. In the house of salvation:
We shall find him in that place,

That shall us comfort by God's
grace.—

[Enter CONFESSION.]

Lo, this is Confession. Kneel down
and ask mercy,

⁴⁰ knowledge.

For he is in good conceit⁴¹ with God
almighty.

EVERY. O glorious fountain that all
uncleanness doth clarify,

Wash me from the spots of vice
unclean,

That on me no sin may be seen.

I come with Knowledge for my re-
demption,

Redempt with hearty and full con-
trition;

For I am commanded a pilgrimage
to take,

And great accounts before God to
make.

Now, I pray you, Shrift,⁴² mother of
salvation,

Help my good deeds for my piteous
exclamation.

CONF. I know your sorrow well,
Everyman;

Because with Knowledge ye come to
me,

I will you comfort as well as I can,
And a precious jewel I will give
thee,

Called penance, voider⁴³ of ad-
versity;

Therewith shall your body chastised
be,

With abstinence and perseverance in
God's service:

Here shall you receive that scourge
of me,

Which is penance strong; that ye
must endure,

To remember thy Savior was
scourged for thee

With sharp scourges, and suffered it
patiently;

So must thou, ere thou scape that
painful pilgrimage.

Knowledge, keep him in this voyage,
And by that time Good-Deeds will
be with thee.

But in any wise, be sicker⁴⁴ of
mercy,

For your time draweth fast; and ye
will saved be,

Ask God mercy, and He will grant
truly.

⁴¹ favor.

⁴² absolution

⁴³ MS. *voice voider*; probably a scribal error.

⁴⁴ sure.

When with the scourge of penance
man doth him bind,
The oil of forgiveness then shall he
find.

EVERY. Thanked be God for his
gracious work,

For now I will my penance begin;
This hath rejoiced and lighted my
heart,

Though the knots be painful and
hard within.

KNOW. Everyman, look your penance
that he fulfil,

What pain that ever it to you be,
And Knowledge shall give you coun-
sel at will,

How your account ye shall make
clearly.

EVERY. O eternal God, O heavenly
figure,

O way of righteousness, O goodly
vision,

Which descended down in a virgin
pure

Because he would Everyman redeem,
Which Adam forfeited by his dis-
obedience,

O blessed Godhead, elect and high-
divine,

Forgive my grievous offence;
Here I cry thee mercy in this pres-
ence.

O ghostly treasure, O ransom and
redeemer,

Of all the world hope and conductor,
Mirror of joy, founder of mercy,
Which illumineth heaven and earth
thereby,

Hear my clamorous complaint,
though it late be!

Receive my prayers; unworthy in
this heavy life

Though I be, a sinner most abomi-
nable,

Yet let my name be written in Moses'
table.

O Mary, pray to the Maker of all
thing,

Me for to help at my ending,
And save me from the power of my
enemy,

For Death assaileth me strongly;
And, Lady, that I may by means of
thy prayer

Of your Son's glory to be partner,
By the means of his passion I it
crave,

I beseech you, help my soul to
save!—

Knowledge, give me the scourge of
penance,

My flesh therewith shall give ac-
quaintance.

I will now begin, if God give me
grace.

KNOW. Everyman, God give you time
and space:

Thus I bequeath you in the hands
of our Savior,

Now may you make your reckoning
sure.

EVERY. In the name of the Holy
Trinity,

My body sore punished shall be:
[*Scourges himself.*]

Take this, body, for the sin of the
flesh;

Also thou delightest to go gay and
fresh,

And in the way of damnation thou
did me bring;

Therefore suffer now strokes of pun-
ishing.

Now of penance I will wade the
water clear,

To save me from purgatory, that
sharp fire.

GOOD-D. I thank God, now I can walk
and go,

And am delivered of my sickness and
woe.

Therefore with Everyman I will go,
and not spare;

His good works I will help him to de-
clare.

KNOW. Now, Everyman, be merry
and glad;

Your Good-Deeds cometh now, ye
may not be sad;

Now is your Good-Deeds whole and
sound,

Going upright upon the ground.

EVERY. My heart is light, and shall
be evermore;

Now will I smite faster than I did
before.

GOOD-D. Everyman, pilgrim, my spe-
cial friend,

Blessed be thou without end;
For thee is prepared the eternal glory.
Ye have me made whole and sound,
Therefore I will bide by thee in every
stound.⁴⁵

EVERY. Welcome, my Good-Deeds!
Now I hear thy voice,

I weep for very sweetness of love.

KNOW. Be no more sad, but ever re-
joice:

God seeth thy living in his throne
above.

Put on this garment to thy behoof,⁴⁶

Which is wet with your tears,

Or else before God you may it miss,

When ye to your journey's end come
shall.

EVERY. Gentle Knowledge, what do
ye it call?

KNOW. It is a garment of sorrow,

From pain it will you borrow;⁴⁷

Contrition it is,

That getteth forgiveness;

It pleaseth God passing well.

GOOD-D. Everyman, will you wear it
for your heal?

[EVERYMAN *puts on the
robe of contrition.*]

EVERY. Now blessed be Jesu, Mary's
Son,

For now have I on true contrition.

And let us go now without tarrying.

Good-Deeds, have we clear our
reckoning?

GOOD-D. Yea, indeed I have [it]
here.

EVERY. Then I trust we need not fear.

Now, friends, let us not part in twain.

KNOW. Nay, Everyman, that will we
not, certain.

GOOD-D. Yet must thou lead with
thee

Three persons of great might.

EVERY. Who should they be?

GOOD-D. Discretion and Strength
they hight,⁴⁸

And thy Beauty may not abide be-
hind.

KNOW. Also ye must call to mind

Your Five-Wits as for your coun-
sellors.

GOOD-D. You must have them ready
at all hours.

⁴⁵ hour. ⁴⁶ benefit. ⁴⁷ redeem. ⁴⁸ are called.

EVERY. How shall I get them hither?

KNOW. You must call them all to-
gether,

And they will hear you incontinent.

EVERY. My friends, come hither and
be present,

Discretion, Strength, my Five-Wits,
and Beauty.

BEAUTY. Here at your will we be all
ready.

What will ye that we should do?

GOOD-D. That ye would with Every-
man go,

And help him in his pilgrimage.

Advise you, will ye with him or not
in that voyage?

STRENGTH. We will bring him all
thither,

To his help and comfort, ye may be-
lieve me.

DISCRETION. So will we go with him
all together.

EVERY. Almighty God, loved might
thou be,

I give thee laud that I have hither
brought

Strength, Discretion, Beauty, and
Five-Wits; lack I nought;

And my Good-Deeds, with Knowl-
edge clear,

All be in my company at my will
here;

I desire no more to my business.

STREN. And I, Strength, will by you
stand in distress,

Though thou would in battle fight on
the ground.

FIVE-WITS. And though it were
through the world round,

We will not depart for sweet nor
sour.

BEAU. No more will I unto death's
hour,

Whatsoever thereof befall.

DISCR. Everyman, advise you first of
all,

Go with a good advisement and de-
liberation.

We all give your virtuous monition

That all shall be well.

EVERY. My friends, hearken what I
will tell:

I pray God reward you in his
heavenly sphere.

Now hearken, all that be here,
 For I will make my testament
 Here before you all present.
 In alms half my good I will give
 with my hands twain
 In the way of charity, with good
 intent,
 And the other half still shall remain
 In quethe ⁴⁹ to be returned there it
 ought to be.
 This I do in despite of the fiend of
 hell,
 To go quite out of his peril
 Ever after and this day.

KNOW. Everyman, hearken what I
 say;

Go to Priesthood, I you advise,
 And receive of him in any wise
 The holy sacrament and ointment to-
 gether,
 Then shortly see ye turn again
 hither;

We will all abide you here.

FIVE-W. Yea, Everyman, hie you
 that ye ready were.

There is no emperor, king, duke, nor
 baron,

That of God hath commission,
 As hath the least priest in the world
 being; ⁵⁰

For of the blessed sacraments pure
 and benign

He beareth the keys, and thereof
 hath the cure

For man's redemption, it is ever sure,
 Which God for our soul's medicine
 Gave us out of his heart with great
 pain.

Here in this transitory life, for thee
 and me

The blessed sacraments seven there
 be:

Baptism, confirmation, with priest-
 hood good,

And the sacrament of God's precious
 flesh and blood,

Marriage, the holy extreme unction,
 and penance;

These seven be good to have in re-
 membrance,

Gracious sacraments of high divinity.

EVERY. Fain would I receive that holy
 body,

⁴⁹ bequest.

⁵⁰ living.

And meekly to my ghostly ⁵¹ father
 I will go. [*Exit EVERYMAN.*]

FIVE-W. Everyman, that is the best
 that ye can do.

God will you to salvation bring,
 For priesthood exceedeth all other
 thing;

To us Holy Scripture they do teach,
 And convert man from sin, heaven
 to reach.

God hath to them more power given,
 Than to any angel that is in heaven:
 With five words he may consecrate
 God's body in flesh and blood to
 make,

And handleth his Maker between his
 hands.

The priest bindeth and unbindeth all
 bands,

Both in earth and in heaven.

Thou ministers all the sacraments
 seven.

Though we kiss thy feet thou were
 worthy.

Thou art surgeon that cureth sin
 deadly:

No remedy we find under God
 But all only priesthood.

Everyman, God gave priests that
 dignity,

And setteth them in his stead among
 us to be;

Thus be they above angels in de-
 gree.

KNOW. If priests be good, it is so
 surely.

But when Jesus hanged on the cross
 with great smart,

There he gave, out of his blessed
 heart,

The same sacrament in great tor-
 ment;

He sold them not to us, that Lord
 omnipotent.

Therefore Saint Peter the apostle
 doth say

That Jesus' curse have all they
 Which God their Savior do buy or
 sell,

Or they for any money do take or
 tell. ⁵²

Sinful priests give the sinners ex-
 ample bad,

⁵¹ spiritual.

⁵² count.

Their children sit by other men's
fires, I have heard,
And some haunt women's company,
With unclean life, as lusts of lechery;
These be with sin made blind.

FIVE-W. I trust to God no such may
we find.

Therefore let us priesthood honor,
And follow their doctrine for our
souls' succor;

We be their sheep, and they shep-
herds be,

By whom we all be kept in surety.

Peace, for yonder I see Everyman
come,

Which hath made true satisfaction.

[*Re-enter EVERYMAN.*]

GOOD-D. Methink it is he indeed.

EVERY. Now Jesus be your alder
speed.⁵³

I have received the sacrament for my
redemption,

And then mine extreme unction:

Blessed be all they that counselled
me to take it!

And now, friends, let us go without
longer respite;

I thank God that ye have tarried so
long.

Now set each of you on this rod⁵⁴
your hand,

And shortly follow me.

I go before, there I would be; God
be your guide.

STREN. Everyman, we will not from
you go,

Till ye have done this voyage long.

DISCR. I, Discretion, will bide by you
also.

KNOW. And though this pilgrimage be
never so strong,⁵⁵

I will never part you from.

Everyman, I will be as sure by thee

As ever I did by Judas Maccabee.

EVERY. Alas, I am so faint I may not
stand,

My limbs under me do fold.

Friends, let us not turn again to this
land,

Not for all the world's gold,

For into this cave must I creep,

And turn to earth and there to sleep.

BEAU. What, into this grave? alas!

EVERY. Yea, there shall ye consume
more and less.

BEAU. And what, should I smother
here?

EVERY. Yea, by my faith, and never
more appear.

In this world live no more we shall,
But in heaven before the highest,
Lord of all.

BEAU. I cross out all this! Adieu, by
Saint John!

I take my tap in my lap and am
gone.⁵⁶

EVERY. What, Beauty, whither will
ye?

BEAU. Peace! I am deaf, I look not
behind me,

Not and thou wouldest give me all
the gold in thy chest.

EVERY. Alas, whereto may I trust?

Beauty goeth fast away from me,

She promised with me to live and die.

STREN. Everyman, I will thee also
forsake and deny;

Thy game liketh⁵⁷ me not at all.

EVERY. Why, then ye will forsake me
all!

Sweet Strength, tarry a little space.

STREN. Nay, sir, by the rood of grace,
I will hie me from thee fast,

Though thou weep to⁵⁸ thy heart to-
brast.⁵⁹

EVERY. Ye would ever bide by me, ye
said.

STREN. Yea, I have you far enough
conveyed;

Ye be old enough, I understand,

Your pilgrimage to take on hand.

I repent me that I hither came.

EVERY. Strength, you to displease I
am to blame;

Will you break promise that is debt?

STREN. In faith, I care not;

Thou art but a fool to complain,

You spend your speech and waste
your brain;

Go, thrust thee into the ground!

EVERY. I had wend surer I should you
have found.

⁵⁶ proverbial expression for a hasty depar-
ture; literally *tap* is a bunch of tow for spin-
ning.

⁵⁷ pleaseth.

⁵⁸ till. ⁵⁹ break in pieces.

⁵³ the help of you all.

⁵⁴ rood, cross. ⁵⁵ hard.

He that trusteth in his Strength,
She him deceiveth at the length.
Both Strength and Beauty forsake
me,

Yet they promised me fair and
lovingly.

DISCR. Everyman, I will after
Strength be gone,

As for me I will leave you alone.

EVERY. Why, Discretion, will ye for-
sake me?

DISCR. Yea, in faith, I will go from
thee,

For when Strength goeth before
I follow after evermore.

EVERY. Yet, I pray thee, for the love
of the Trinity,

Look in my grave once piteously.

DISCR. Nay, so nigh will I not come.
Farewell, every one!

EVERY. Oh, all thing faileth, save God
alone,

Beauty, Strength, and Discretion;
For when Death bloweth his blast,
They all run from me full fast.

FIVE-W. Everyman, my leave now of
thee I take;

I will follow thee the other, for here I
thee forsake.

EVERY. Alas! then may I wail and
weep,

For I took you for my best friend.

FIVE-W. I will no longer thee keep;
Now farewell, and there an end.

EVERY. O Jesu, help; all have for-
saken me!

GOOD-D. Nay, Everyman, I will bide
with thee,

I will not forsake thee indeed;

Thou shalt find me a good friend at
need.

EVERY. Gramercy, Good-Deeds, now
may I true friends see;

They have forsaken me every one,
I loved them better than my Good-
Deeds alone.

Knowledge, will ye forsake me also?

KNOW. Yea, Everyman, when ye to
death shall go;

But not yet for no manner of danger.

EVERY. Gramercy, Knowledge, with
all my heart.

KNOW. Nay, yet I will not from hence
depart,

Till I see where ye shall be come.

EVERY. Methink, alas, that I must be
gone,

To make my reckoning and my debts
pay,

For I see my time is nigh spent away.

Take example, all ye that this do
hear or see,

How they that I love best do forsake
me,

Except my Good-Deeds that bideth
truly.

GOOD-D. All earthly things is but
vanity:

Beauty, Strength, and Discretion, do
man forsake,

Foolish friends and kinsmen that
fair spake,

All flee save Good-Deeds, and that
am I.

EVERY. Have mercy on me, God most
mighty,

And stand by me, thou Mother and
Maid, holy Mary.

GOOD-D. Fear not, I will speak for
thee.

EVERY. Here I cry God mercy.

GOOD-D. Short our end, and diminish
our pain;

Let us go and never come again.

EVERY. Into thy hands, Lord, my soul
I commend,

Receive it, Lord, that it be not lost!

As thou me boughtest, so me defend,

And save me from the fiend's boast,

That I may appear with that blessed
host

That shall be saved at the day of
doom.

In manus tuas—of mights most

For ever—*commendo spiritum*
*meum.*⁶⁰ [Dies.]

KNOW. Now hath he suffered that we
all shall endure;

The Good-Deeds shall make all sure.

Now hath he made ending;

Methinketh that I hear angels sing

And make great joy and melody,

Where Everyman's soul received
shall be.

ANGEL. Come, excellent elect spouse
to Jesu;

Here above thou shalt go,

⁶⁰ Into Thy hands I commend my spirit.

Because of thy singular virtue.
 Now the soul is taken the body
 from,
 Thy reckoning is crystal-clear.
 Now shalt thou into the heavenly
 sphere,
 Unto the which all ye shall come
 That live well before the day of
 doom.
 DOCTOR. This moral men may have
 in mind;
 Ye hearers, take it of worth, old and
 young,
 And forsake Pride, for he deceiveth
 you in the end,
 And remember Beauty, Five-Wits,
 Strength, and Discretion,
 They all at the last do Everyman
 forsake,
 Save his Good-Deeds, there doth he
 take.
 But beware, and they be small
 Before God, he hath no help at
 all.

None excuse may be there for Every-
 man.
 Alas, how shall he do then?
 For after death amends may no man
 make,
 For then mercy and pity do him for-
 sake.
 If his reckoning be not clear when
 he doth come,
 God will say—*Ite maledicti in ignem
 æternum.*⁶¹
 And he that hath his account whole
 and sound.
 High in heaven he shall be crowned;
 Unto which place God bring us all
 thither,
 That we may live body and soul to-
 gether.
 Thereto help the Trinity!
 Amen, say ye, for saint charity.

*Thus Endeth This Moral Play of
 Everyman.*

⁶¹ Go, ye cursed, into eternal fire.

CHAPTER IV

THE DRAMA OF THE ELIZABETHAN AGE (1563-1642)

I. SHAKESPEARE'S PREDECESSORS

The preceding chapter, "The Rise of Drama in England," closed with the production of *Gorboduc* in 1562. In that tragedy and in the two early comedies, *Ralph Roister Doister* and *Gammer Gurton's Needle*, the dominant influence was that of Roman drama. It is unfortunate that the Elizabethans knew little of the Greek drama, for the Roman dramatists, Plautus and Seneca, whose plays they knew, do not represent the best in ancient drama. The symmetry and restraint of Greek tragedy were qualities that the Elizabethan drama always conspicuously lacked.¹

In England the conflict between the native and the Roman drama resulted in the triumph of the former (in France a similar struggle ended very differently); but the Roman drama contributed better structural standards, and it revealed the literary possibilities of the drama. The Elizabethans took over from the Romans the practising of dividing their plays into five acts, and from this time on the English playwrights showed a better sense of form. The classical influence brought a new conception of the difference between comedy and tragedy. It helped to raise the level of comic dialogue and situation above that of the interlude. The Roman dramas also supplied abundant plot material. The Elizabethans were especially fond of the cases of mistaken identity which they found in Plautus. Lyly's *Mother Bombye* and Shakespeare's *The Comedy of Errors* both owe much to Plautus's *Menæchmi*.

The first figure of importance in Elizabethan drama proper is John Lyly (1553-1606). His novel, *Euphues or the Anatomy of Wit* (1579), and its sequel, *Euphues and his England* (1580), contributed a new feeling for the beauty of language and influenced even the speech of the court. Here is a typical Euphuistic sentence—note the use of balance, antithesis, and alliteration:—"Although I have shrined thee in my heart for a trusty friend, I will shun thee hereafter as a trothless foe." Lyly's artificial style, with its extravagant word-plays, quibbles, and "conceits," greatly influenced the early work of Shakespeare, particularly in *Love's Labor's Lost*.

Lyly, a Master of Arts from Oxford, was ambitious to succeed as a courtier; and in his plays he tried to please the court rather than the people. He wrote his eight plays not for the dramatic companies but for the child actors attached to the choir-schools of St. Paul's and the Queen's Chapel at Whitehall. In these plays, which were produced between 1580 and 1590, the Latin influence affects content as well as form. Much of Lyly's material is borrowed from Ovid, Pliny, and other non-dramatic Latin authors. The titles of Lyly's plays indicate the Latin influence: *Campaspe*, *Midas*, *Endimion*, *Gallathea*, *Sappho* and *Phao*, etc. These plays, which are written in Euphuistic prose, are in-

¹ In *The Ancient Classical Drama*, Chapter VI, Richard G. Moulton suggests the changes that would be necessary in making a Greek tragedy of *Macbeth*.

terspersed with beautiful songs designed for the choir-boys who acted in Lyly's plays. Most of Lyly's followers, including Shakespeare, imitated his example and wrote lyrics for their plays. Lyly's work, influential though it was, stands somewhat apart from the main current of Elizabethan drama, to which we must now return.

In 1576, before Lyly began to write for the stage, James Burbage, father of Shakespeare's famous actor, had built "The Theater," the first English playhouse and the direct ancestor of all later English and American theaters. The wandering companies of professional actors, who had performed in inn-yards and other places, began to settle down in permanent theaters, which were built just outside the walls of London. Now that there were regular theaters with professional actors eager for popular plays, a number of young university men began to write for the stage. Marlowe, Greene, Peele, and Kyd, rather than Lyly, deserve the credit for raising the native drama to the level of literature. Knowing something of the Roman drama, these poets tried both to please the public and to give the native drama better poetry, structure, and characterization. We shall not attempt to treat these forerunners of Shakespeare in the order of chronology, which is, in the case of many of their plays, still undetermined.

Thomas Kyd (1558-1594) is an important playwright of whose life little is known. He cultivated a popular type of melodrama, filled with revenge, insanity, and bloodshed, known as the "tragedy-of-blood." The type is modeled on the rhetorical closet-dramas attributed to Seneca. These Roman "plays" are mainly a succession of highly wrought speeches designed, it has been suggested, not to be acted but to be read aloud by elocutionists. *The Spanish Tragedy* (c. 1590) was one of the most popular of all Elizabethan plays. In plot it bears a striking resemblance to *Hamlet*, and Kyd is usually accredited with writing the lost early version on which Shakespeare's great tragedy is based. The Elizabethans were fond of witnessing such bloody scenes as the Greeks habitually banished from the stage. The plot of the typical tragedy-of-blood shows the ghost of a murdered man clamoring for revenge. At the end of the play practically all the important characters are killed. Plays which show the influence of *The Spanish Tragedy* are very numerous; examples are Marlowe's *The Jew of Malta* and Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus*, *Julius Cæsar*, and *Hamlet*.

George Peele (1558-c.1598) was a better poet than dramatist, and he managed to infuse a lyric beauty and a poetic atmosphere into his plays. The subject of his *David and Bethsabe* recalls the material of the miracle plays, but the spirit of the play is sensuous and half-pagan. *The Old Wives' Tale* (1595), which had some influence on Milton's *Comus* and supplied Arnold Bennett with an effective title for a novel, anticipates to a certain extent such romantic comedies as *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Its plot resembles that of a nursery tale.

Robert Greene (c. 1560-1592) may be regarded as the founder of romantic comedy, a type in which Shakespeare, of whom Greene was jealous, remains without a rival. In his plays Greene used many of the same pastoral elements which he had already used in his prose romances. His best known comedies are *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* (c. 1590), which somewhat resembles Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus* (c. 1588), and *The Scottish History of James IV* (c. 1591), which is not a genuine history play but a romantic comedy. Greene was apparently the first to employ the popular Elizabethan situation of a woman who, disguised as a page, flees to the forest to avoid some kind of persecution. These parts were designed for the boy actors who played the parts of women.

II. CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE

The ablest of the university "wits" and one of the greatest of Elizabethan dramatists was Christopher Marlowe (1564-1593), who was born in the same year with Shakespeare. He was the son of a shoemaker, but a rich man who had observed the boy's unusual ability sent him to Cambridge, where he graduated at the age of nineteen. Marlowe was killed in a tavern in 1593 at the age of twenty-nine under mysterious circumstances which have been only partly explained in Dr. Hotson's recent book, *The Death of Marlowe*. His first play, *Tamburlaine*, in two parts, was produced with great success in 1587. It marked a great advance over anything that had been previously written in English both in literary quality and in dramatic effectiveness. Marlowe transformed the lifeless blank verse of *Gorboduc* into a thing of power and beauty. In "Marlowe's mighty line" (the phrase is Jonson's) the drama had at last found a medium suited to both poetry and drama. In the ranting, robustious world-conqueror, Tamburlaine—an Asiatic soldier contemporary with Chaucer—Marlowe introduced to the stage a typical Elizabethan hero. Marlowe's second play, *Doctor Faustus* (c. 1588), is still, in spite of its unevenness and the poor condition of the text, one of the most powerful of Elizabethan tragedies and a not unworthy predecessor of Goethe's great *Faust*. The leading figures in Marlowe's plays embody the lust for power in some form. Tamburlaine desires to conquer the world; Faustus sells his soul to the devil for a life of power and pleasure; Barabas, in *The Jew of Malta* (c. 1590), embodies the love of money as a form of power. *Edward II* (1594), an important history play which influenced Shakespeare's *Richard II*, is a study of the opposite type of character, a weak king. Marlowe had raised two dramatic types, tragedy and history, to a high level. He had paved the way for such plays as *Macbeth* and *Henry IV*.

III. THE THEATRICAL BACKGROUND

At this point we shall break off the narrative thread in order to discuss the theatrical background of Elizabethan drama. Although that drama was never static but continually changing, the period of Shakespeare's activity, from about 1590 to 1611, possessed certain general characteristics which enable us to treat it as a unit. Following the plan of the introductory chapter, we shall pay particular attention to the audience, the actors, and the theater. Then we shall resume the story of Elizabethan drama with Shakespeare, Jonson, and Beaumont and Fletcher.

Great poems may sometimes be written in a time of war and national turmoil, but great plays demand a time of peace and prosperity. The theater cannot flourish except when people have the price of admission and leisure to go to the theater. The Elizabethans lived in a time of comparative peace and of greater prosperity than England had ever known. Under Elizabeth England had a national unity that it had never possessed before. Domestic and foreign commerce were developing rapidly, and a rising middle class was coming to have considerable influence. People were beginning to travel more extensively, and they brought back new ideas and new interests. The discovery of America had widened men's horizons. The Reformation and the Renaissance had aroused new interest in religion, in literature, and in art. It was a time of great opportunity for the individual, a time of progress. Old ideas were breaking up, and men were eager for experiment. The craving for amusement was as strong as it is today. There were, besides the theaters, spectacles, processions, jugglers,

clowns, and many other sources of entertainment. If ever England deserved the name of Merry England, it deserved it in the time of Shakespeare.

London was almost theater-mad. With a population of from one to two hundred thousand, the weekly attendance at the theaters was thirty thousand or more. An average of perhaps six theaters was open daily winter and summer. Probably never before or since has a larger percentage of the public gone regularly to the theater. To understand the part played by the theater in Elizabethan life, we need to remember that the stage very largely took the place of our modern newspapers, magazines, novels, athletic contests, opera, vaudeville, and motion pictures.

London was—even when we remember modern London and New York—full of amazing incongruities. The city was dirty, unsanitary, full of disease, and yet given to fashion and display. We find the mingled passions of the Italian Renaissance: the love of scholarship, beauty, and art mingled with lust, revenge, and moral obtuseness. We find Londoners entering with equal delight into bear-baiting, persecuting dissenters and Catholics, and seeing Shakespeare's great tragedies. Hard by the Globe, where his plays were performed, stood the houses of ill fame and the bear gardens. Some of the theaters, like the Hope, were built for both plays and bear-baiting. The spectator could take his choice between seeing *Hamlet* or *Twelfth Night* and watching the dogs worry old Hunks, the blind bear.

The Elizabethan audience seems to us morally callous if not actually brutal. Insanity, idiocy, and deformity were things to laugh at. The Elizabethans greatly delighted in the crude tragedy-of-blood, with its revenge motive, its ghosts, and its bloody conclusion. The almost complete absence of women in the audience is only a partial explanation. The Elizabethans had an almost childlike fondness for stories; and their plays, with many threads of plot, are primarily story-plays. They took great delight in the elements of suspense, surprise, spectacle, and all the pomp and circumstance of war.

The motley audience of dandies, lawyers, tradesmen, gentlemen, and groundlings was a thoroughly representative one, but it hardly suggests the undemonstrative English audience of today. It was a much less sophisticated audience than that of Racine or Ibsen, not so well educated but with no less native intelligence. For the Londoner lived in a highly educative environment, and inability to read and write was no proof of his ignorance. London supplied Shakespeare with what others went to Cambridge or Oxford to learn. Those who believe that Bacon wrote Shakespeare's plays do not realize the opportunities which Elizabethan London offered to an intelligent youth like Shakespeare.

The limitations of the audience explain certain shortcomings of Elizabethan drama. Thinking of Shakespeare, Professor A. H. Thorndike remarks: "No [other] great dramatist reveals so plainly the lack of any standards of criticism or culture in his audience." The Elizabethan audience cared little for subtle psychology or for ideas, but it did care a good deal for character. "The great tribute to the Elizabethan audience," says Thorndike, "is the host of persons created for its recognition."

The Elizabethan dramatists sometimes felt that their audience's limitations prevented them from doing their best work. One recalls Hamlet's well-known allusion to "the groundlings, who for the most part are capable of nothing but inexplicable dumb shows and noise." John Webster, lamenting his inability to conform to the standards of the ancient drama, wrote in the preface to *The White Devil*: "If it be objected that this [play] is no true dramatic poem, I shall easily confess it . . . for should such a man present to such an auditory [audience] the most sententious tragedy that ever was written, observing all the critical laws, as height of style, and gravity of person, enrich it with the

sententious chorus . . . yet after all this divine rapture . . . the breath that comes from the uncappable multitude is able to poison it."

IV. THE ELIZABETHAN THEATER

When James Burbage built "The Theater" in 1576, he modeled it on the Elizabethan inn-yards, in which he had doubtless often played. The court, or yard, of an Elizabethan inn made a very convenient place for an extemporaneous performance. The building, usually of three stories, enclosed three sides of a rectangle. It was easy to enclose the fourth side, put up a temporary stage under the gallery at the other end of the yard, and hang up a curtain behind which the actors could dress. The earliest Elizabethan theaters were, so to speak, inn-yards without the inn. Certain details of the structure were drawn from the rings, or amphitheaters, used for bear-baiting; and often the theaters themselves were planned for both plays and bears. The Hope Theater, to which reference has been made, was thus planned, though erected as late as 1614; and it was later given over entirely to bear-baiting.

Although the Elizabethan theaters varied in shape from square, like the Fortune, to round, like the first Globe (the second Globe was octagonal), all these theaters had certain characteristics in common. The roof covered only the galleries and the back part of the stage. The pit, in which the groundlings stood, was open to the sky. Some of the winter theaters in the city, however, like the second Blackfriars, were completely roofed and were lighted by torches. Performances in summer were given at three in the afternoon if the weather was fair. The stage projected into the middle of the theater and was surrounded on three sides by spectators. There were some seats in the galleries and a few on the stage itself; but the pit, which corresponds in position to the modern orchestra, had no seats. Here the groundlings stood throughout the performance. There was no drop-curtain; and, judged by present-day standards, properties were scanty and poor. There was little, if any, painted scenery except in the masques, which were not presented in the regular theaters. There were trap-doors, but no footlights and no inclined floor.

The Elizabethan theater, in short, was semi-medieval. It stands midway between the pageant-wagon of the miracle plays and the twentieth century picture-frame theater. It was medieval even by comparison with the theater of Racine and Molière less than a century later. But it was not ill adapted to the uses which Marlowe, Jonson, and Shakespeare made of it. Any one who has observed how readily children will act out a story with few or no properties can understand how the Elizabethans managed to do without our modern theatrical equipment. For them, as for Hamlet, the play was the thing.

The Elizabethan stage consisted of three parts, which we may call the front, or outer, stage; the back, or inner, stage; and the balcony, or upper stage. The front stage was used far more than the other two. It was here that the actors usually stood, in the very midst of the audience. There were doors at the right and left of the stage which the actors used for entrances and exits. To change the scene, it was only necessary for the actors present on the stage to walk out at one door and let others come on at the other. Many of the scenes which were played upon the front stage were not localized, even in the mind of the playwright himself. When the place is important, the dramatist gives us a hint, as in *Rosalind's* "Well, this is the forest of Arden," or *Viola's* "And what should I do in Illyria?"

The back, or inner, stage was used to represent a cave; a forest; a shop; a room in a house, as in the opening scene in *Doctor Faustus*; a tomb, as in *Romeo*

and *Juliet*. It might also be used for scenes which the playwright felt could not bear the full light of day. Sometimes it was used for scenes in which heavy properties were demanded. In cases in which the back stage was used, the front stage often represented a place immediately in front of a house, a temple, a palace, or a forest. The curtain in front of the back stage might be drawn aside (it was not a drop-curtain) to reveal Faustus in his study or a body in a tomb.

The balcony, or upper stage, was often used to represent a wall or a tower, especially in plays dealing with war. The windows just over the doors which the actors used for exits and entrances could be used to represent rooms in the second story of a house, as perhaps in the balcony scenes in *Romeo and Juliet*.

When we compare plays written for the Elizabethan theater with those written for the modern picture-frame stage, the most striking difference is the readiness with which the Elizabethan playwright could change his scene. Here, as has been already suggested, the Elizabethan stage is very close to the motion picture. *A Doll's House* contains three acts, each of which is a single scene. *Antony and Cleopatra* has a total of forty-two scenes—there are fifteen in Act IV alone. This ability to shift the scene almost instantly accounts in large part for the complexity of the plots, and for the large number of characters in Elizabethan plays. So greatly did the Elizabethans love the story element that often Shakespeare, not satisfied with a fairly complex story, added a sub plot, as in *Twelfth Night*, which by modern standards is only loosely related to the main plot. Sometimes, as in *The Merchant of Venice* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, one finds three or four distinct strands of plot woven together.

With the exception of Ben Jonson, the Elizabethan dramatists seldom observed the three unities which the French adopted and which help so largely to explain the differences between the plays of Racine and those of Shakespeare. Even Jonson's understanding of the unities was very loose, as may be seen in his *Volpone*. After a fashion, Shakespeare observed the unities of time and place in *The Comedy of Errors* and *The Tempest*—perhaps unintentionally. Certainly he and his fellows cared little for the compression in which the Greek and French dramatists excelled mainly because of their limitations as to time, place, and action.

V. ELIZABETHAN ACTORS

It is significant that great actors and great playwrights often appear about the same time, for without great actors the playwright is badly handicapped. Little as we know of the actors who played the great rôles of Sophocles and Euripides, we may be sure they were competent. We know a little more concerning the actors for whom Marlowe, Jonson, and Shakespeare wrote, although we know far less than we know about Garrick, Mrs. Siddons, Irving, Sarah Bernhardt, and Coquelin.

Among the Elizabethans actors and acting had a vogue that reminds one of the popular favor enjoyed today by screen stars and athletic heroes. There was much amateur acting in the schools and elsewhere. Few names of actors come down to us with much distinctness. Edward Alleyn, a gigantic and strong-voiced actor, took the leading parts in Marlowe's tragedies; and Marlowe seems to have fitted his plays to Alleyn's talents with great skill. Of James Burbage's famous son Richard, who took the leading rôles in Jonson's *Volpone* and most of Shakespeare's tragedies, we know a little more. Burbage, judging by the parts he played, must have been an actor of great versatility and emotional power. An "Elegy" refers to certain parts in which he excelled:

Young Hamlet, old Hieronymo,
Kind Lear, the grievèd Moor, and more beside
That lived in him, have now forever died.

Both Alleyn and Burbage were bred up in the profession of acting. Elizabethan actors frequently began much earlier than present-day actors; many of them must have begun their acting as choir-boys in the schools. The stock companies to which the actors belonged frequently played as many as forty plays in a season, half of them new. No Elizabethan actor had to play a single part night after night, as Frank Bacon did in *Lightin'* a few years ago; the variety of the company's repertory gave the young actor a chance to play a great variety of parts.

Some of the Elizabethan actors, coming from the choir-schools for boys, had had years of experience before they were grown. Each of the companies seems to have had two or three boys to take the parts of women, old men, and children. These boy actors frequently appear as women disguised in men's clothing. It is supposed to be easier for a youth to impersonate a woman disguised as a man than to represent a woman in her ordinary dress. The Greeks, however, though they used men for women's parts, rarely employed disguise of this kind. That these Elizabethan boy actors were often extremely proficient seems evident from the pains which Shakespeare took with the parts he wrote for them. With the exception of Beatrice in *Much Ado*, however, Shakespeare's heroines are not talkative. Ben Jonson's epitaph on the boy actor, Salathiel Pavy, runs in part:

Years he numbered scarce thirteen
When fates turned cruel,
Yet three filled zodiacs had he been
The stage's jewel;

And he did act, what now we moan,
Old men so duly,
As, sooth, the Paræ thought him one,
He played so truly.

The bareness of the Elizabethan stage not only demanded good acting but made it immediately effective. Burbage as Hamlet stood in the midst of his audience, and every orator knows that he can move his hearers almost in direct ratio to his nearness to them. The modern actor with his historically correct costume in the midst of an elaborate scenic set is a part of a picture—visually effective but in a sense removed from the audience by the footlights and the picture-frame stage. Elizabethan actors on the barest of stages, dressed in contemporary costume, seem to have swayed their audiences as effectively as any actors before or since.

For the Elizabethan actor, as for the Greek, a good voice was indispensable. His audience liked oratory, poetry, elaborate even if artificial diction. If to modern ears Shakespeare's lines sometimes seem pompous, bombastic, or strained, it is to be remembered that for his audience he created a splendor of diction which, at its best, has never been surpassed. An audience that would listen to Hamlet's soliloquies, Mercutio's Queen Mab speech, or Prospero's stately periods had a keener sense of the beauty of the spoken word than one finds in any modern audience.

Both actors and audience help to explain the *dramatis personæ* which fill Elizabethan plays. Outside of Shakespeare, there is little subtle delineation of character and little interest in its complexities. Character is usually boldly indicated on certain broad lines; more than this did not interest the groundlings. Elizabethan characters, however, show a very great variety. There was little

tendency to characterization on any conventional social lines of cleavage, though there were of course certain conventional types, like the fool, the clown, and the villain. It was a time of individualism, a period in which old ideas and customs were rapidly breaking down. The Elizabethan was, as Thorndike puts it, "less a cog in the machine, an item in society, a member of a class, a party, a sect, than ever before, and perhaps . . . since." The Elizabethan theater-goer was interested in seeing other individuals like himself. Marlowe's heroes are perhaps as typical as any, though Shakespeare's Richard III, Henry V, and Iago and Chapman's Bussy D'Ambois are impressive examples of Elizabethan character on the same side. They recall Bacon's proud boast, "I have taken all knowledge for my province." They remind one, too, of our American self-made financiers, our so-called captains of industry.

VI. SHAKESPEARE

William Shakespeare (1564-1616) was born in the year of Marlowe's birth in the little town of Stratford-on-Avon in Warwickshire. His mother, Mary Arden, was of gentle birth. His father, whose social station was somewhat lower, was a dealer in miscellaneous commodities and for a time a man of considerable influence. As a boy, Shakespeare almost certainly attended the Stratford grammar school, where he learned the "small Latin and less Greek" to which Ben Jonson refers. Traveling companies of actors usually came to Stratford two or three times a year. As they had to ask Shakespeare's father for permission to give their performances, we may be sure the boy saw some of the plays. By the time Shakespeare was thirteen, his father met with business reverses and took his son from school. At eighteen Shakespeare was married to Ann Hathaway, eight years his senior, under circumstances which suggest that the marriage was not voluntary on his part. About 1585-7 Shakespeare left Stratford for London, where he was to live until his retirement about 1611. He died in 1616 and was buried in the Stratford Church.

Not long after his arrival in London, Shakespeare became an actor in the company of James Burbage, who had built the Theater; and he remained with the company when the Theater was torn down and rebuilt on the south side of the Thames as the Globe.

Shakespeare was a shrewd business man and invested the money he made in real estate in Stratford. At the time of his death, he owned the best house in town. He had taken out, in his father's name, a patent of gentility some years before. His income, which was considerable, was derived partly from acting, partly from writing plays, and partly from shares which entitled him to a portion of the earnings of his company. Edwin Arlington Robinson's fine dramatic monologue, "Ben Jonson Entertains a Man from Stratford," gives what is probably an accurate account of Shakespeare's ambition for rank and property.

Shakespeare was not a great actor like Molière if we may judge from the parts which he seems to have played: Adam in *As You Like It*, the Ghost in *Hamlet*, and the elder Knowell in Jonson's *Every Man in his Humor*. In later years he perhaps did not act at all. Nevertheless his experience as an actor must have taught him the secrets of the theater as nothing else could have done.

Shakespeare's first work as playwright was apparently the re-touching of old plays. The three parts of *Henry VI* probably represent revision rather than original authorship on Shakespeare's part. It has been conjectured that Marlowe worked with Shakespeare in revising these particular plays. At any rate, there is no doubt that Shakespeare's early work reveals considerable indebtedness to Marlowe and to Lyly, Kyd, and Greene as well.

The dates both of composition and of production of Shakespeare's plays are often uncertain. Less than half his plays were printed during his lifetime, and most of these were printed without his sanction. The Elizabethan company regarded its plays as private property and was usually unwilling to allow them to be printed as long as they held the stage. Some of the plays were printed in quarto, or pamphlet, form by unscrupulous booksellers who were eager to print a play while it was at the height of its popularity on the stage. Sometimes the printers seem to have had the play copied during its performance; at other times they may have got the text from some of the actors. In 1623, seven years after Shakespeare's death, two of his fellow actors, Heminge and Condell, published Shakespeare's collected plays in *The First Folio* edition. They probably hoped to make money out of the venture as well as to keep alive the memory of their friend. The *First Folio* plays, however, do not exactly constitute the Shakespeare canon. For instance, it is generally believed that Shakespeare and Fletcher collaborated in *Henry VIII*, which is included in the *First Folio*, and in *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, which is not.

The problem of ascertaining the approximate dates of Shakespeare's various plays is a very difficult one, but Shakespearean scholars have come to a fairly general agreement with respect to most of them. The student may be interested in the methods used in "dating" the plays. Occasionally one finds a reference to a Shakespeare play in a contemporary document. In his *Palladis Tamia*, published in 1598, Francis Meres refers to a dozen of Shakespeare's plays by name; hence we know that these particular plays could not have been written after 1598. In the text of certain plays one finds allusions to contemporary events which furnish a clue. Moreover, it has been discovered that Shakespeare's style and versification underwent certain changes as he grew older. In the early plays he used rime freely; in the later plays he rarely employed it. The early plays contain many end-stopped and few run-on lines; with the later plays the reverse is true.

Most authorities divide Shakespeare's work into four periods approximately as follows: 1, a period of imitation and experiment (1590-1594); 2, a period of histories and comedies (1595-1600); 3, a period of tragedies and satiric comedies (1601-1608); and 4, a final period of dramatic romances (1609-1611). It is to be noted that in none of these periods did Shakespeare limit himself to a single dramatic form. His plays represent nearly every type of drama that was popular in his day, and no other playwright managed to keep pace with the changing taste of his public as Shakespeare did.

In the period of imitation and experiment (1590-1594) come *Titus Andronicus*, a tragedy-of-blood of the Kydian type; the three *Henry VI* plays; *Richard III*, a play that reveals the influence of Marlowesque tragedy; and *King John*, a skilful adaptation of an old history play. To this period also belong three early comedies. *Love's Labor's Lost* reveals the influence of Lyly in its Euphuistic style. *The Comedy of Errors* is a clever adaptation of Plautus's *Menæchmi*. Shakespeare showed his skill by adding a second pair of twins to complicate the plot. *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* is a romantic comedy which recalls Greene's plays; it also foreshadows such later plays as *As You Like It*. Shakespeare, it is to be noted, matured rather slowly. By 1593, the year in which Marlowe died, Shakespeare, who was only two months his junior, had written nothing comparable to *Doctor Faustus*. He had, however, shown a much wider range of interest than Marlowe. To this period belong also the two narrative poems, *Venus and Adonis* (1593) and *Lucrece* (1594), and perhaps some of the *Sonnets*, which were not published until 1609.

In the second period (1595-1600) Shakespeare attained an almost complete mastery of dramatic technique and revealed great growth in poetic and dramatic

power. To this period belong the early romantic tragedy, *Romeo and Juliet*, and a later tragedy, *Julius Caesar*, which foreshadows the great tragic masterpieces of the third period. In the second period come the English history plays: *Richard II*, reminiscent of Marlowe's *Edward II*; *Henry V*; and the two parts of *Henry IV*, which contain Shakespeare's greatest comic character, Falstaff. Here also belong seven comedies. Two of these, *The Taming of the Shrew* and *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, are largely farce. The other five are romantic comedies. *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, which was perhaps written for some nobleman's wedding, is a delightful blend of fantasy, romance, and farce. *The Merchant of Venice* is notable for the figure of Shylock and for the complexity of its plot. The three later romantic comedies, *As You Like It*, *Twelfth Night*, and *Much Ado about Nothing*, represent Shakespeare's best work in this field.

Shakespeare never attempted high comedy of the type represented by Molière's *Tartuffe*; in his plays comedy is always mingled with romance or farce, usually with both. Indeed, it has been more than once suggested that the modern world has outgrown the Shakespearean type of romantic comedy. Shakespeare's comedies are not realistic or satiric, like Jonson's; and they represent no attempt to reform the world or to portray life as it is. The setting is some far-off romantic spot, like Illyria, Venice, or the Forest of Arden. The atmosphere is poetic and fanciful. The plots of all his comedies include much the same elements: love at first sight, cases of mistaken identity, women disguised as men. There are usually two heroines, like Viola and Olivia, Rosalind and Celia, who are strongly contrasted with each other. The subplot is usually farce, but there is often a second or third strand of plot which is potentially tragic, like the Claudio-Hero story in *Much Ado*. What the characters do is seldom the result of what they are, as in high comedy; but the characters are as lifelike and as delightful as any that Shakespeare created.

The third period (1601-1608) marks something of a break in Shakespeare's development. He abandoned the history play, apparently because he realized that history is not a type of drama but merely dramatic raw material. Beginning with *Julius Caesar*, Shakespeare treated his historical material as tragedy rather than as chronicle history. *Macbeth* is a genuine tragedy; the earlier *Henry IV* is a medley of farce, high comedy, romance, tragedy, and melodrama. The comedies of the third period—*Troilus and Cressida*, *Pericles* (neither of which is apparently wholly of Shakespeare's workmanship), *All's Well That Ends Well*, and *Measure for Measure*—are gloomy and bitter. Perhaps the influence of Jonson's satiric, realistic comedies of manners helped to turn the public taste away from romantic comedy. At any rate, in this great period Shakespeare's best work was done in tragedy. The four greatest of his tragedies came apparently in the following order: *Hamlet*, *Othello*, *King Lear*, and *Macbeth*. To these a fifth is sometimes added, *Antony and Cleopatra*. It is difficult to say which of these represents Shakespeare's masterpiece, but it is certain that they are not surpassed by the work of any other author. *Hamlet* makes the strongest appeal to our time, but structurally it is inferior to *Othello*, which is technically the most perfect. *King Lear* is perhaps the most powerful of them all, but it presents great difficulties to the producer. So also does *Antony and Cleopatra* with its kaleidoscopic changes of scene.

Shakespearean tragedy seems more permanent in its appeal than Shakespearean comedy. The plots and settings of the tragedies are as far from being realistic as those of the comedies, but the characters are treated more realistically in the tragedies. Although the number of characters is large, the interest of the audience is largely centered upon one, as in Marlowe's plays; occasionally, as in *Romeo and Juliet* and *Antony and Cleopatra*, two figures divide our interest. The tragic heroes of Shakespeare are always persons of rank, as with Sophocles

and Racine; they are never middle-class, as in Ibsen, and never drawn from the lower levels, as often in O'Neill's plays. Something of the medieval notion of tragedy as the reversal in fortune of princes survives in Shakespeare; but the tragic outcome, in spite of such melodramatic elements as ghosts, insanity, accidents, etc., is always due primarily to some tragic flaw in the leading character. Macbeth is more nearly bad than the rest, Othello more sinned against than sinning. Character, one might almost say, is destiny. The story always includes the chief events that lead up to the tragic catastrophe, which is nearly all that Sophocles, Racine, and Ibsen show us.

Shakespeare's tragedies closely resemble in many ways the plays of his contemporaries, and it is not likely that the average Elizabethan saw any vital distinction between *Hamlet* and *Lear* on the one hand and *Tamburlaine* and *The Spanish Tragedy* on the other. The chief difference lies in Shakespeare's treatment of character. By the side of Antony and Hamlet, Tamburlaine and Hieronymo are mere types. *Hamlet* belongs to the tragedy-of-blood in nearly every respect but one—characterization. Shakespeare gave his audience the thrills which they were accustomed to expecting from revenge, insanity, the presence of ghosts, etc.; and yet he managed by the marvelous subtlety and vividness of his characterization to raise a melodramatic plot to the level of great tragedy. Shakespeare's practice contains a lesson for the modern playwrights which they would do well to heed. He never scorned his audience and he never wrote "highbrow" plays; he gave them what they wanted and at the same time contrived to satisfy his own standards of artistic excellence. Similarly, Victor Hugo in *Hernani* took the popular French melodrama of his day and raised it to the level of literature if not of great tragedy.

The plays of Shakespeare's fourth and last period (1609-1611) are dramatic romances resembling the plays of Beaumont and Fletcher, who were very popular at this time. *Cymbeline* in particular bears a marked resemblance to their *Philaster*, but scholars are not agreed as to the priority of the latter. *Cymbeline*, *A Winter's Tale*, and *The Tempest* resemble not only the Beaumont and Fletcher plays but also Shakespeare's romantic comedies of the second period. They are superior to these early comedies in characterization, but they reveal a loss of technical skill or perhaps a growing indifference to the demands of the audience. In *The Tempest* Shakespeare seems to be writing for himself rather than for his audience. Nevertheless *The Tempest*, generally regarded as his last play, is certainly a magnificent conclusion to the work of the greatest of the British dramatists.

Shakespeare—contrary to the current notion of him expressed in Arnold's sonnet—was one of the most popular playwrights of his time. His friend and rival, Ben Jonson, wrote of him:

He was not of an age, but for all time!
And all the Muses still were in their prime,
When, like Apollo, he came forth to warm
Our ears, or like a Mercury to charm!

And yet, in spite of Shakespeare's undeniable popularity, few if any divined his incomparable superiority over Marlowe, Jonson, and Fletcher. Shakespeare's reputation reached its nadir in the Restoration when French and classic literary ideals were in vogue. Dryden and his contemporaries spoke of Shakespeare much in the way we of today refer to Longfellow and Tennyson. The eighteenth century witnessed the gradual rise of Shakespeare's fame, but it was long the fashion to say that Shakespeare was a poor artist who made a great mistake when he rejected the unities. The English and German writers of the Romantic period were the first to claim for Shakespeare supremacy among

world poets and to treat him as a master artist who created his own critical standards. Shakespeare for over a century has held the position assigned him by Goethe, Coleridge, Lamb, and Hazlitt. Only in the last half-century, however, have Shakespearean scholars made a thorough study of the Elizabethan theater for which Shakespeare wrote his plays; and consequently much early Shakespearean criticism is erroneous or misleading.

The student should be careful not to adopt the conventional manner of praising Shakespeare uncritically. One may admit that Shakespeare is the greatest of all dramatists and even—with the possible exception of Homer—the world's greatest writer and still find serious defects in his work. He rarely attains the perfection of workmanship that characterizes a lesser dramatist like Racine. Shakespeare excels Racine and Sophocles not because he has fewer faults but because he has greater merits than they. He holds his high position by virtue of his rare poetic gift, his mastery of dramatic craftsmanship, and his unrivaled knowledge of the human heart. It is neither necessary nor wise to speak of Shakespeare as a great philosopher. In many ways he was not an original thinker at all. Had he been one, he would have chafed at the limitations of his audience. The poetic passages which impress us most—like Prospero's "Our revels now are ended"—are the commonplaces of philosophic thinking. But, as Shakespeare well knew, such platitudes have a way of revealing their truth to us when we undergo certain experiences common to the race. Shakespeare gave his audience, to quote Pope's line, "What oft was thought but ne'er so well expressed."

The problem of the producer who wishes to present Shakespeare on the modern stage is a very difficult one. Harley Granville-Barker, an English playwright and producer whose Shakespearean productions are probably the best of our time, has stated the chief difficulties in an article on "Shakespeare and Modern Stagecraft" in the *Yale Review* for July, 1926. His statement of the difficulties forms an excellent summary of the differences between the Elizabethan and the contemporary stage:

First. His language is by no means our current language. We have often to stop and think what he means. In the theatre . . . there can be no stopping to think, no turning back of the pages. . . . Secondly. When Shakespeare wrote of Romans, of the Trojans and the Greeks, of ancient Britons and of Danes, his sense of "period" differed much from ours. Thirdly. The women's parts in his plays were acted by boys; and quite obviously—this is so obvious that it is mostly forgotten—they were written to that end. Fourthly. And this is the most important difference of all, for it is the mainspring of many differences—our stage is the stage of visual illusion; Shakespeare's appeal was primarily to the ear.

The solution of the problem of presenting Shakespeare on the modern stage lies in no one thing; but, as Granville-Barker suggests, it must be worked out in the case of each play with an intimate knowledge of the possibilities and the limitations of both the contemporary and the Elizabethan stage.

VII. BEN JONSON

Ben Jonson (1573-1637) was one of the most learned men of his day. Every one recalls Fuller's comparison of his talk with that of Shakespeare: "Many were the wit-combats betwixt him and Ben Jonson, which two I behold like a Spanish great Gallion and an English man of War: Master Jonson (like the former) was built far higher in learning, Solid, but Slow in his performances. Shakespeare, with the English man of War, lesser in bulk but lighter in sailing, could turn with all tides, tack about, and take advantage of all winds, by the quickness of his Wit and Invention." Jonson, an avowed classicist, tried, with

scant success, to give the drama definite literary aims and standards. Jonson, however, was a classicist rather by temperament than because of any reverence for antiquity. He wrote in his *Discoveries*: "Nothing is more ridiculous than to make an author a dictator, as the schools have done Aristotle. . . . Let Aristotle and others have their dues; but if we can make farther discoveries of truth and fitness than they, why are we envied?" After a fashion, Jonson observed the unities, but he did not limit his action to one plot, and, as may be seen in *Volpone*, he construed the unity of place rather loosely. Jonson, however, took far more pains with the writing and the printing of his plays than most of his fellows. His two classical tragedies, *Sejanus* (1603) and *Catiline* (1611), were failures on the stage. Shakespeare treated his Romans as Elizabethans, but Jonson tried hard to picture them as they really were. It was in comedy that Jonson did his best work. Yet one must not forget the charming masques which he wrote for the king and court. These were acted at Whitehall by elaborately costumed lords and ladies with stage-settings devised by Inigo Jones and music by Ferrabosco.

Jonson was a realist and a satirist. In his first important play, *Every Man in his Humor* (1598)—a play in which Shakespeare is known to have acted—he avowed his intention of correcting the manners and morals of his contemporaries:

. . . with an armèd and resolvèd hand
I'll strip the ragged follies of the time
Naked as at their birth.

In *Every Man out of his Humor* (1599) Jonson defines *humor*:

As when some one peculiar quality
Doth so possess a man that it doth draw
All his affects, his spirits, and his powers
In their confluxions all to run one way—
This may truly said to be a Humor.

Jonson's method—as the word *humor* (meaning dominant trait or failing) suggests—was to exaggerate some one characteristic of each of his personages to make it ridiculous. His characters, consequently, like those of Roman comedy, are almost types, embodiments of a ruling passion, rather than completely realized individuals like Falstaff or Hamlet. Most of Jonson's better plays are studies of some one human failing, like *The Alchemist* (1610), which is a study of quackery. *Volpone* (1605, 1607) is a powerful study of the passion of greed which reminds one of Molière's *Tartuffe* and *L'Avare*. The two Jonson comedies just mentioned and *The Silent Woman* (1609) and *Bartholomew Fair* (1614) are his masterpieces. *Eastward Hoe* (1605), which he wrote in collaboration with Chapman and Marston, is a brilliant satire on the worst type of emigrant to the New World. Jonson's comedies of manners are very different from Shakespeare's romantic comedies though they have some resemblance to the Falstaff scenes in *Henry IV*. Jonson's comedies, which are usually laid in contemporary London, give a marvelous picture of Elizabethan life.

VIII. BEAUMONT AND FLETCHER

Francis Beaumont (1584-1616) and John Fletcher (1579-1625) are the most famous dramatic collaborators of all time. Both were accomplished poets and skilful playwrights. Their plays have great technical merits and contain many effective scenes and beautiful lyrics, but they lack consistent characterization. Beaumont and Fletcher did not hesitate to sacrifice truth and consistency for

immediate effectiveness. In their plays we see the first signs of the decay of the Elizabethan drama. Their plays—of which *Philaster* (1611) and *The Maid's Tragedy* (1611) are the best—set a new dramatic fashion. In the decade that followed 1600 the best Elizabethan plays had been Shakespeare's tragedies and Jonson's comedies. Now the fashion changed to romantic comedy or, to use a more exact term, dramatic romance. The resemblance of the Beaumont and Fletcher plays to the plays of Shakespeare's final period has been noted. It may well be that it was the popularity of Beaumont and Fletcher that prompted Shakespeare to abandon tragedy to follow their example. Their *Knight of the Burning Pestle* (c. 1610) is the best of Elizabethan burlesques. After Beaumont's death in 1616, Fletcher collaborated with Massinger and others and wrote independently till his death in 1625. *The Faithful Shepherdess* (1629), a pastoral drama, is one of the best of his later plays.

IX. CONCLUSION

Among the important contemporaries of Shakespeare who have not been discussed are Thomas Dekker, George Chapman, Thomas Middleton, Thomas Heywood, and John Webster. Still others of importance came a little later: John Ford, Philip Massinger, and James Shirley. Besides these, there were numerous others whose work shows merit of some sort, as the reader of Lamb's *Specimens* may remember.

After the deaths of Beaumont and Shakespeare in 1616, the drama rapidly declined. Under James I, who reigned from 1603 to 1625, the Puritans became bitterly hostile to the theater, which now became more and more an instrument of the corrupt court and less and less a reflection of English life as a whole. The moral tone of many of the later plays is almost as bad as the worst of the Restoration plays. Finally, in September, 1642, Parliament closed the London theaters. The Puritans were in power at last. The theaters remained closed until the Restoration in 1660, when Charles II came to the throne.

The greatest dramatic period in the history of the world had come to an end, but not before it had given us Shakespeare's incomparable masterpieces and a considerable number of other plays that are important in drama and in literature. A list of the best Elizabethan plays, outside of Shakespeare, would include *Doctor Faustus* and *Edward II*, by Marlowe; *Bussy D'Ambois*, by Chapman; *The Alchemist* and *Volpone*, by Jonson; *The Changeling*, by Middleton and Rowley; *The Shoemakers' Holiday*, by Dekker, recently revived at the Old Vic in London; *Philaster* and *The Maid's Tragedy*, by Beaumont and Fletcher; *The Faithful Shepherdess*, by Fletcher alone; *The Duchess of Malfi*, by Webster; and *The Broken Heart*, by Ford.

The Romantic critics, it has been noted, often praised Shakespeare as a poet who could not err. Lamb and others likewise overpraised the lesser Elizabethans, partly because they disliked Pope and his imitators. In *A Study of the Drama*, published in 1910, Brander Matthews gave the Elizabethans a much lower rating than tradition had assigned to them. He admitted that Elizabethan drama possessed energy, imaginative fire, and a robust vitality, but he charged it with a lack of taste, logic, symmetry, and harmony. In 1923 the English dramatic critic, William Archer, did his best to demolish the Elizabethans, at least as dramatists. Of the work of Shakespeare's contemporaries he said: "It is the product of its age—an age that was but semi-civilised. It dealt in violent passions and rough humours, suitable for audiences who were quick of apprehension, but in the main rude, incult, unpolished. The platform stage, imperfectly localised and with no pictorial background, lent itself to what may be called go-as-

you-please drama, full of copious rhetoric and unchastened humour. Under such conditions, the writing of a passable play demanded little of what we should now call specifically dramatic talent. A certain fluency of dialogue was all that was required."

Neither Archer nor Matthews, however, pressed this reasoning to its logical conclusion in the case of Shakespeare, whose merits and faults were those of his contemporaries. If what they say of Marlowe and Jonson is true, then one may well say with Thorndike, "Even in its supreme achievement, the plays of Shakespeare, the English drama betrays its experimentation, its lack of determined standards, and its confusion of artistic ideals with the demands of the populace." One may admit that Shakespeare and his fellow-dramatists did not often attain the limited perfection of Sophocles and Racine and yet maintain that, on the whole, the Elizabethan drama represents certainly the greatest period in British drama and probably in the drama of the world.

THE TRAGICAL HISTORY OF DOCTOR FAUSTUS *

CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE

CHARACTERS

THE POPE.
CARDINAL OF LORRAIN.
EMPEROR OF GERMANY.
DUKE OF VANHOLT.
FAUSTUS.
VALDES AND CORNELIUS, *friends to FAUSTUS*.
WAGNER, *servant to FAUSTUS*.
CLOWN.
ROBIN.
RALPH.
VINTNER.
HORSE-COURSER.
KNIGHT.
OLD MAN.
SCHOLARS, FRIARS, and ATTENDANTS.
DUCHESS OF VANHOLT.
LUCIFER.
BELZEBUB.
MEPHISTOPHILIS.
Good Angel.
Evil Angel.
The Seven Deadly Sins.
DEVILS.
SPIRITS *in the shape of* ALEXANDER THE
GREAT, *of his Paramour, and of* HELEN
OF TROY.
CHORUS.

[Enter CHORUS.]

CHORUS. Not marching now in
fields of Thrasimene,
Where Mars did mate¹ the Cartha-
ginians;
Nor sporting in the dalliance of love,
In courts of kings where state is over-
turn'd;
Nor in the pomp of proud audacious
deeds,

Intends our Muse to vaunt his heavenly
verse:

Only this, gentlemen,—we must per-
form

The form of Faustus' fortunes, good or
bad.

To patient judgments we appeal our
plaud,²

And speak for Faustus in his infancy.
Now is he born, his parents base of
stock,

In Germany, within a town call'd
Rhodes;³

Of riper years to Wittenberg he went,
Whereas his kinsmen chiefly brought
him up.

So soon he profits in divinity,
The fruitful plot of scholarism grac'd,⁴
That shortly he was grac'd with doc-
tor's name,

Excelling all whose sweet delight dis-
putes

In heavenly matters of theology;
Till swollen with cunning,⁵ of a self-
conceit,

His waxen wings⁶ did mount above his
reach,

And, melting, Heavens conspir'd his
overthrow;

For, falling to a devilish exercise,
And glutted [now] with learning's
golden gifts,

He surfeits upon cursèd necromancy.
Nothing so sweet as magic is to him,
Which he prefers before his chiefest
bliss,

And this the man that in his study sits!
[Exit.]

² for applause.

³ Roda, in the Duchy of Saxe-Altenburg,
near Jena.

⁴ the garden of scholarship being adorned
by him.

⁵ knowledge.
⁶ an allusion to the myth of Icarus, who
flew too near the sun.

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editor and publisher from W. A. Neilson: *The
Chief Elizabethan Dramatists*. Houghton
Mifflin Company.

¹ Confound. But Hannibal was victorious
at Lake Trasumennus, B. C. 217.

SCENE I.

[Enter FAUSTUS in his Study.]

FAUST. Settle thy studies, Faustus,
and begin
To sound the depth of that thou wilt
profess;⁷

Having commenc'd, be a divine in
show.

Yet level⁸ at the end of every art,
And live and die in Aristotle's works.
Sweet Analytics,⁹ 't is thou hast
ravish'd me,

Bene disserere est finis logices.

Is to dispute well logic's chiefest end?
Affords this art no greater miracle?
Then read no more, thou hast attain'd
the end;

A greater subject fitteth Faustus' wit.
Bid *ὄν καὶ μὴ ὄν*¹⁰ farewell; Galen come,
Seeing *Ubi desinit Philosophus, ibi in-*
*cipit Medicus;*¹¹

Be a physician, Faustus, heap up gold,
And be eternis'd for some wondrous
cure.

*Summum bonum medicinæ sanitas,*¹²

"The end of physic is our body's
health."

Why, Faustus, hast thou not attain'd
that end?

Is not thy common talk sound Aphor-
isms?¹³

Are not thy bills¹⁴ hung up as monu-
ments,

Whereby whole cities have escap'd the
plague,

And thousand desperate maladies been
eas'd?

Yet art thou still but Faustus and a
man.

Wouldst thou make men to live eter-
nally,

Or, being dead, raise them to life again?
Then this profession were to be es-
teem'd.

Physic, farewell.—Where is Justinian?

[Reads.]

⁷ teach publicly. ⁸ aim. ⁹ logic.

¹⁰ This is Mr. Bullen's emendation of Q₁,
Oncaymceon, a corruption of the Aristotelian
phrase for "being and not being."

¹¹ "Where the philosopher leaves off, there
the physician begins."

¹² This and the previous quotation are from
Aristotle.

¹³ medical maxims. ¹⁴ announcements.

*Si una eademque res legatur duobus,
alter rem, alter valorem rei, &c.*¹⁵

A pretty case of paltry legacies!

[Reads.]

*Exhæreditare filium non potest pater
nisi, &c.*¹⁶

Such is the subject of the Institute¹⁷

And universal Body of the Law.¹⁸

His¹⁹ study fits a mercenary drudge,
Who aims at nothing but external
trash;

Too servile and illiberal for me.

When all is done, divinity is best;

Jerome's Bible,²⁰ Faustus, view it well.

[Reads.]

Stipendium peccati mors est. Ha!

Stipendium, &c.

"The reward of sin is death." That's
hard. [Reads.]

*Si peccasse negamus, fallimur, et nulla
est in nobis veritas.*

"If we say that we have no sin, we de-
ceive ourselves, and there's no
truth in us." Why then, belike
we must sin and so consequently
die.

Ay, we must die an everlasting death.

What doctrine call you this, *Che sera
sera*,

"What will be shall be?" Divinity,
adieu!

These metaphysics of magicians

And necromantic books are heavenly;
Lines, circles, scenes, letters, and char-
acters,

Ay, these are those that Faustus most
desires.

O what a world of profit and delight,

Of power, of honour, of omnipotence

Is promis'd to the studious artisan!

All things that move between the quiet
poles

Shall be at my command. Emperors
and kings

Are but obeyed in their several prov-
inces,

Nor can they raise the wind or rend
the clouds;

¹⁵ "If one and the same thing is bequeathed
to two persons, one gets the thing and the
other the value of the thing."

¹⁶ "A father cannot disinherit the son ex-
cept," etc.

¹⁷ of Justinian, under whom the Roman
law was codified.

¹⁸ Q₁, Church. ¹⁹ its. ²⁰ the Vulgate.

But his dominion that exceeds ²¹ in this
Stretcheth as far as doth the mind of
man.

A sound magician is a mighty god:
Here, Faustus, try thy ²² brains to gain
a deity.

Wagner!

[Enter WAGNER.]

Commend me to my dearest friends,
The German Valdes and Cornelius;
Request them earnestly to visit me.

WAG. I will, sir. [Exit.]

FAUST. Their conference will be a
greater help to me.
Than all my labours, plod I ne'er so
fast.

[Enter GOOD ANGEL and EVIL ANGEL.]

G. ANG. O Faustus! lay that
damnèd book aside;
And gaze not upon it lest it tempt thy
soul,
And heap God's heavy wrath upon thy
head.
Read, read the Scriptures: that is
blasphemy.

E. ANG. Go forward, Faustus, in
that famous art,
Wherein all Nature's treasure is contain'd:

Be thou on earth as Jove is in the
sky,
Lord and commander of these elements.

[Exeunt ANGELS.]

FAUST. How am I glutted with conceit ²³ of this!
Shall I make spirits fetch me what I
please,
Resolve me of all ambiguities,
Perform what desperate enterprise I
will?

I'll have them fly to India for gold,
Ransack the ocean for orient pearl,
And search all corners of the new-
found world

For pleasant fruits and princely delicacies;

I'll have them read me strange philosophy

And tell the secrets of all foreign kings;
I'll have them wall all Germany with
brass,

²¹ excels.

²² Q., *tire my*.

²³ idea.

And make swift Rhine circle fair Wittenberg;

I'll have them fill the public schools
with [silk].²⁴

Wherewith the students shall be
bravely clad;

I'll levy soldiers with the coin they
bring,

And chase the Prince of Parma from
our land,²⁵

And reign sole king of all the provinces;

Yea, stranger engines for the brunt of
war

Than was the fiery keel ²⁶ at Antwerp's
bridge,

I'll make my servile spirits to invent.
Come, German Valdes and Cornelius,

And make me blest with your sage
conference.

[Enter VALDES and CORNELIUS ²⁷]]

Valdes, sweet Valdes, and Cornelius,
Know that your words have won me
at the last

To practise magic and concealèd arts:
Yet not your words only, but mine own
fantasy,

That will receive no object, for my
head

But ruminates on necromantic skill.

Philosophy is odious and obscure,
Both law and physic are for petty wits;
Divinity is basest of the three,
Unpleasant, harsh, contemptible, and
vile:

'Tis magic, magic, that hath ravish'd
me.

Then, gentle friends, aid me in this
attempt;

And I that have with concise syllogisms

Gravell'd the pastors of the German
church,

And made the flow'ring pride of Wittenberg

Swarm to my problems, as the infernal
spirits

²⁴ Emend. Dyce. *Q. skill*.

²⁵ the Netherlands, over which Parma re-established the Spanish dominion.

²⁶ a ship filled with explosives used to blow up a bridge built by Parma in 1585 at the siege of Antwerp.

²⁷ The famous Cornelius Agrippa. German Valdes is not known.

On sweet Musæus,²⁸ when he came to hell,
Will be as cunning as Agrippa was,
Whose shadows made all Europe honour him.

VALD. Faustus, these books, thy wit, and our experience
Shall make all nations to canonise us,
As Indian Moors²⁹ obey their Spanish lords,

So shall the subjects³⁰ of every element
Be always serviceable to us three;
Like lions shall they guard us when we please;

Like Almain rutters³¹ with their horsemen's staves,
Or Lapland giants, trotting by our sides;

Sometimes like women or unwedded maids,

Shadowing more beauty in their airy brows

Than have the white breasts of the queen of love:

From Venice shall they drag huge argosies,

And from America the golden fleece
That yearly stuffs old Philip's treasury;
If learned Faustus will be resolute.

FAUST. Valdes, as resolute am I in this

As thou to live; therefore object it not.

CORN. The miracles that magic will perform

Will make thee vow to study nothing else.

He that is grounded in astrology,
Enrich'd with tongues, well seen³² in minerals,

Hath all the principles magic doth require.

Then doubt not, Faustus, but to be renown'd,

And more frequented for this mystery
Than heretofore the Delphian Oracle.
The spirits tell me they can dry the sea,

And fetch the treasure of all foreign wracks,

Ay, all the wealth that our forefathers hid

²⁸ cf. Virgil, *Aeneid*, vi. 667.

²⁹ American Indians. ³⁰Q., *spirits*.

³¹ troopers. Germ. *Reiters*. ³² versed.

Within the massy entrails of the earth;
Then tell me, Faustus, what shall we three want?

FAUST. Nothing, Cornelius! O this cheers my soul!

Come show me some demonstrations magical,

That I may conjure in some lusty grove,
And have these joys in full possession.

VALD. Then haste thee to some solitary grove,

And bear wise' Bacon's³³ and Albanus's³⁴ works,

The Hebrew Psalter and New Testament;

And whatsoever else is requisite

We will inform thee ere our conference cease.

CORN. Valdes, first let him know the words of art;

And then, all other ceremonies learn'd,
Faustus may try his cunning by himself.

VALD. First I'll instruct thee in the rudiments,

And then wilt thou be perfecter than I.

FAUST. Then come and dine with me, and after meat,

We'll canvass every quiddity³⁵ thereof;
For ere I sleep I'll try what I can do:

This night I'll conjure though I die therefore. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.³⁶

[*Enter two SCHOLARS.*]

1 SCHOL. I wonder what's become of Faustus that was wont to make our schools ring with *sic probo?*³⁷

2 SCHOL. That shall we know, for see here comes his boy.

[*Enter WAGNER.*]

1 SCHOL. How now, sirrah! Where's thy master?

WAG. God in heaven knows!

2 SCHOL. Why, dost not thou know?

³³ Roger Bacon.

³⁴ perhaps Pietro d'Abano, a medieval alchemist; perhaps a misprint for Albertus (Magnus), the great schoolman.

³⁵ fine point.

³⁶ Before Faustus's House.
³⁷ "Thus I prove"—a common formula in scholastic discussions.

WAG. Yes, I know. But that follows not.

1 SCHOL. Go to, sirrah! Leave your jesting, and tell us where he is.

WAG. That follows not necessary by force of argument, that you, being licentiate, should stand upon 't: therefore, acknowledge your error and be attentive.

2 SCHOL. Why, didst thou not say thou knew'st?

WAG. Have you any witness on 't?

1 SCHOL. Yes, sirrah, I heard you.

WAG. Ask my fellow if I be a thief.

2 SCHOL. Well, you will not tell us?

WAG. Yes, sir, I will tell you; yet if you were not dunces, you would never ask me such a question; for is not he *corpus naturale*?³⁸ and is not that *mobile*? Then wherefore should you ask me such a question? But that I am by nature phlegmatic, slow to wrath, and prone to lechery (to love, I would say), it were not for you to come within forty foot of the place of execution, although I do not doubt to see you both hang'd the next sessions. Thus having triumph'd over you, I will set my countenance like a precisian,³⁹ and begin to speak thus:—Truly, my dear brethren, my master is within at dinner, with Valdes and Cornelius, as this wine, if it could speak, would inform your worships; and so the Lord bless you, preserve you, and keep you, my dear brethren, my dear brethren.

[Exit.]

1 SCHOL. Nay, then, I fear he has fallen into that damned Art, for which they two are infamous through the world.

2 SCHOL. Were he a stranger, and not allied to me, yet should I grieve for him. But come, let us go and inform the Rector, and see if he by his grave counsel can reclaim him.

1 SCHOL. O, I fear me nothing can reclaim him.

2 SCHOL. Yet let us try what we can do. [Exeunt.]

³⁸ "*Corpus naturale seu mobile*" is the current scholastic expression for the subject-matter of Physics." (Ward.)

³⁹ Puritan.

SCENE III.⁴⁰

[Enter FAUSTUS to conjure.]

FAUST. Now that the gloomy shadow of the earth
Longing to view Orion's drizzling look,
Leaps from th' antarctic world unto the sky,

And dims the welkin with her pitchy breath,

Faustus, begin thine incantations,
And try if devils will obey thy best,
Seeing thou hast pray'd and sacrific'd to them.

Within this circle is Jehovah's name,
Forward and backward anagrammatis'd,

The breviated names of holy saints,
Figures of every adjunct⁴¹ to the Heavens,

And characters of signs and erring stars,⁴²

By which the spirits are enforc'd to rise:

Then fear not, Faustus, but be resolute,
And try the uttermost magic can perform.

*Sint mihi Dei Acherontis propitii!
Valeat numen triplex Jehovah! Ignei,
aerii, aquatani spiritus, salvet! Orientis princeps Belzebub, inferni ardentis monarcha, et Demogorgon, propitiemus vos, ut appareat et surgat Mephistophilis. Quid tu moraris? Per Jehovah, Gehennam, et consecratam aquam quam nunc spargo, signumque crucis quod nunc facio, et per vota nostra, ipse nunc surgat nobis dicatus Mephistophilis!*⁴³

[Enter MEPHISTOPHILIS, a Devil.]

I charge thee to return and change thy shape;

Thou art too ugly to attend on me.

⁴⁰ A Grove.

⁴² planets.

⁴¹ every star belonging to.

⁴³ "Be propitious to me, gods of Acheron! May the triple deity of Jehovah prevail! Spirits of fire, air, water, hail! Belzebub, Prince of the East, monarch of burning hell, and Demogorgon, we propitiate ye, that Mephistophilis may appear and rise. Why dost thou delay? By Jehovah, Gehenna, and the holy water which now I sprinkle, and the sign of the cross which now I make, and by our prayer, may Mephistophilis now summoned by us arise!"

Go, and return an old Franciscan friar;
That holy shape becomes a devil best.

[*Exit DEVIL.*]

I see there's virtue in my heavenly
words;

Who would not be proficient in this
art?

How pliant is this Mephistophilis,
Full of obedience and humility!
Such is the force of magic and my
spells.

[Now,] Faustus, thou art conjuror
laureate,

Thou canst command great Mephis-
tophilis:

*Quin regis Mephistophilis fratris im-
agine.*⁴⁴

[*Re-enter MEPHISTOPHILIS like a
Franciscan Friar.*]

MEPH. Now, Faustus, what would'st
thou have me do?

FAUST. I charge thee wait upon me
whilst I live,

To do whatever Faustus shall com-
mand,

Be it to make the moon drop from her
sphere,

Or the ocean to overwhelm the world.

MEPH. I am a servant to great
Lucifer,

And may not follow thee without his
leave;

No more than he commands must we
perform.

FAUST. Did he not charge thee to
appear to me?

MEPH. No, I came hither of mine
own accord.

FAUST. Did not my conjuring
speeches raise thee? Speak:

MEPH. That was the cause, but yet
per accidens;

For when we hear one rack⁴⁵ the name
of God,

Abjure the Scriptures and his Saviour
Christ,

We fly in hope to get his glorious soul;
Nor will we come, unless he use such
means

Whereby he is in danger to be damn'd:

⁴⁴ "For indeed thou hast power in the image
of thy brother Mephistophilis."

⁴⁵ twist in anagrams.

Therefore the shortest cut for conjuring
Is stoutly to abjure the Trinity,
And pray devoutly to the Prince of
Hell.

FAUST. So Faustus hath
Already done; and holds this principle,
There is no chief but only Belzebub,
To whom Faustus doth dedicate him-
self.

This word "damnation" terrifies not
him,

For he confounds hell in Elysium;⁴⁶

His ghost be with the old philosophers!
But, leaving these vain trifles of men's
souls,

Tell me what is that Lucifer thy lord?

MEPH. Arch-regent and commander
of all spirits.

FAUST. Was not that Lucifer an
angel once?

MEPH. Yes, Faustus, and most
dearly lov'd of God.

FAUST. How comes it then that he
is Prince of devils?

MEPH. O, by aspiring pride and in-
solence;

For which God threw him from the
face of Heaven.

FAUST. And what are you that you
live with Lucifer?

MEPH. Unhappy spirits that fell
with Lucifer,

Conspir'd against our God with Lucifer,
And are for ever damn'd with Lucifer.

FAUST. Where are you damn'd?

MEPH. In hell.

FAUST. How comes it then that thou
art out of hell?

MEPH. Why this is hell, nor am I
out of it.

Think'st thou that I who saw the face
of God,

And tasted the eternal joys of Heaven,
Am not tormented with ten thousand
hells,

In being depriv'd of everlasting bliss?
O Faustus! leave these frivolous de-
mands,

Which strike a terror to my fainting
soul.

FAUST. What, is great Mephis-
tophilis so passionate⁴⁷

⁴⁶ Heaven and hell are indifferent to him.
⁴⁷ sorrowful.

For being depriv'd of the joys of Heaven?

Learn thou of Faustus manly fortitude,
And scorn those joys thou never shalt possess.

Go bear these tidings to great Lucifer:
Seeing Faustus hath incurr'd eternal death

By desperate thoughts against Jove's deity,

Say he surrenders up to him his soul,
So he will spare him four and twenty years,

Letting him live in all voluptuousness;
Having thee ever to attend on me;

To give me whatsoever I shall ask,
To tell me whatsoever I demand,
To slay mine enemies, and aid my friends,

And always be obedient to my will.
Go and return to mighty Lucifer,
And meet me in my study at midnight,
And then resolve ⁴⁸ me of thy master's mind.

MEPH. I will, Faustus. *[Exit.]*

FAUST. Had I as many souls as there be stars,

I'd give them all for Mephistophilis.
By him I'll be great Emperor of the world,

And make a bridge thorough the moving air,

To pass the ocean with a band of men;
I'll join the hills that bind the Afric shore,

And make that [country] continent to Spain,

And both contributory to my crown.
The Emperor shall not live but by my leave,

Nor any potentate of Germany.
Now that I have obtain'd what I desire,

I'll live in speculation ⁴⁹ of this art
Till Mephistophilis return again.

[Exit.]

SCENE IV.⁵⁰

[Enter WAGNER and the CLOWN.]

WAG. Sirrah, boy, come hither.

CLOWN. How, boy! Swowns, boy!

⁴⁸ inform.

⁴⁹ study.

⁵⁰ A Street.

I hope you have seen many boys with such pickadevaunts ⁵¹ as I have. Boy, quotha!

WAG. Tell me, sirrah, hast thou any comings in?

CLOWN. Ay, and goings out too. You may see else.

WAG. Alas, poor slave! See how poverty jesteth in his nakedness! The villain is bare and out of service, and so hungry that I know he would give his soul to the devil for a shoulder of mutton, though it were blood-raw.

CLOWN. How? My soul to the Devil for a shoulder of mutton, though 'twere blood-raw! Not so, good friend. By'r Lady, I had need have it well roasted and good sauce to it, if I pay so dear.

WAG. Well, wilt thou serve me, and I'll make thee go like *Qui mihi discipulus?* ⁵²

CLOWN. How, in verse?

WAG. No, sirrah; in beaten silk and stavesacre. ⁵³

CLOWN. How, how, Knave's acre! ⁵⁴ Ay, I thought that was all the land his father left him. Do you hear? I would be sorry to rob you of your living.

WAG. Sirrah, I say in stavesacre.

CLOWN. Oho! Oho! Stavesacre! Why, then, belike if I were your man I should be full of vermin.

WAG. So thou shalt, whether thou beest with me or no. But, sirrah, leave your jesting, and bind yourself presently unto me for seven years, or I'll turn all the lice about thee into familiars, and they shall tear thee in pieces.

CLOWN. Do you hear, sir? You may save that labour; they are too familiar with me already. Swowns! they are as bold with my flesh as if they had paid for [their] meat and drink.

⁵¹ beards cut to a sharp point (Fr. *pic-à-dévant*).

⁵² Dyce points out that these are the first words of W. Lily's "*Ad discipulos carmen de moribus*."

⁵³ a kind of larkspur, used for destroying lice.

⁵⁴ a mean street in London.

WAG. Well, do you hear, sirrah? Hold, take these guilders.

[Gives money.]

CLOWN. Gridirons! what be they?

WAG. Why, French crowns.

CLOWN. Mass, but for the name of French crowns, a man were as good have as many English counters. And what should I do with these?

WAG. Why, now, sirrah, thou art at an hour's warning, whensoever and wheresoever the Devil shall fetch thee.

CLOWN. No, no. Here, take your gridirons again.

WAG. Truly I'll none of them.

CLOWN. Truly but you shall.

WAG. Bear witness I gave them him.

CLOWN. Bear witness I give them you again.

WAG. Well, I will cause two devils presently to fetch thee away—Baliol and Belcher.

CLOWN. Let your Baliol and your Belcher come here, and I'll knock them, they were never so knockt since they were devils. Say I should kill one of them, what would folks say? "Do you see yonder tall fellow in the round slop?⁵⁶—he has kill'd the devil." So I should be call'd Kill-devil all the parish over.

[Enter two DEVILS: the CLOWN runs up and down crying.]

WAG. Baliol and Belcher! Spirits, away!

[Exeunt DEVILS.]

CLOWN. What, are they gone? A vengeance on them, they have vile long nails! There was a he-devil, and a she-devil! I'll tell you how you shall know them: all he-devils has horns, and all she-devils has clifts and cloven feet.

WAG. Well, sirrah, follow me.

CLOWN. But, do you hear—if I should serve you, would you teach me to raise up Banios and Belcheos?

WAG. I will teach thee to turn thyself to anything; to a dog, or a cat, or a mouse, or a rat, or anything.

CLOWN. How! a Christian fellow to a dog or a cat, a mouse or a rat! No, no, sir. If you turn me into any-

⁵⁶ short wide breeches.

thing, let it be in the likeness of a little pretty frisky flea, that I may be here and there and everywhere. Oh, I'll tickle the pretty wenches' plackets; I'll be amongst them, i' faith.

WAG. Well, sirrah, come.

CLOWN. But, do you hear, Wagner?

WAG. How!—Baliol and Belcher!

CLOWN. O Lord! I pray, sir, let Banio and Belcher go sleep.

WAG. Villain—call me Master Wagner, and let thy left eye be diametrically⁵⁶ fixt upon my right heel, with *quasi vestigias nostras insistere*.⁵⁷

[Exit.]

CLOWN. God forgive me, he speaks Dutch fustian. Well, I'll follow him, I'll serve him, that's flat.

[Exit.]

SCENE V.

[Enter FAUSTUS in his study.]

FAUST. Now, Faustus, must Thou needs be damn'd, and canst thou not be sav'd:

What boots it then to think of God or Heaven?

Away with such vain fancies, and despair:

Despair in God, and trust in Belzebub. Now go not backward: no, Faustus, be resolute.

Why waverest thou? O, something soundeth in mine ears

"Abjure this magic, turn to God again!"

Ay, and Faustus will turn to God again.

To God?—He loves thee not—

The God thou serv'st is thine own appetite,

Wherein is fix'd the love of Belzebub; To him I'll build an altar and a church, And offer lukewarm blood of new-born babes.

[Enter GOOD ANGEL and EVIL ANGEL.]

G. ANG. Sweet Faustus, leave that execrable art.

FAUST. Contrition, prayer, repentance! What of them?

G. ANG. O, they are means to bring thee unto Heaven.

⁵⁶ *as diametrically.*

⁵⁷ "As if to tread in my tracks."

E. ANG. Rather illusions, fruits of lunacy,
That makes men foolish that do trust them most.

G. ANG. Sweet Faustus, think of Heaven, and heavenly things.

E. ANG. No, Faustus, think of honour and of wealth.

[*Exeunt ANGELS.*]

FAUST. Of wealth!

Why, the signiory of Emden⁵⁸ shall be mine.

When Mephistophilis shall stand by me,

What God can hurt thee, Faustus? Thou art safe;

Cast no more doubts. Come, Mephistophilis,

And bring glad tidings from great Lucifer;—

Is 't not midnight? Come, Mephistophilis;

Veni, veni, Mephistophile!

[*Enter MEPHISTOPHILIS.*]

Now tell me, what says Lucifer thy lord?

MEPH. That I shall wait on Faustus whilst he lives,
So he will buy my service with his soul.

FAUST. Already Faustus hath hazarded that for thee.

MEPH. But, Faustus, thou must bequeath it solemnly,
And write a deed of gift with thine own blood,

For that security craves great Lucifer. If thou deny it, I will back to hell.

FAUST. Stay, Mephistophilis! and tell me what good
Will my soul do thy lord.

MEPH. Enlarge his kingdom.

FAUST. Is that the reason why he tempts us thus?

MEPH. *Solamen miseris socios habuisse doloris.*⁵⁹

FAUST. Why, have you any pain that torture others?

MEPH. As great as have the human souls of men.

⁵⁸ Emden, near the mouth of the river Ems, was an important commercial town in Elizabethan times.

⁵⁹ "Misery loves company."

But tell me, Faustus, shall I have thy soul?

And I will be thy slave, and wait on thee,

And give thee more than thou hast wit to ask.

FAUST. Ay, Mephistophilis, I give it thee.

MEPH. Then Faustus, stab thine arm courageously.

And bind thy soul that at some certain day

Great Lucifer may claim it as his own; And then be thou as great as Lucifer.

FAUST. [*stabbing his arm.*] Lo, Mephistophilis, for love of thee, I cut mine arm, and with my proper blood

Assure my soul to be great Lucifer's, Chief lord and regent of perpetual night!

View here the blood that trickles from mine arm.

And let it be propitious for my wish.

MEPH. But, Faustus, thou must Write it in manner of a deed of gift.

FAUST. Ay, so I will. [*Writes.*]

But, Mephistophilis,
My blood congeals, and I can write no more.

MEPH. I'll fetch thee fire to dissolve it straight. [*Exit.*]

FAUST. What might the staying of my blood portend?
Is it unwilling I should write this bill? Why streams it not that I may write afresh?

Faustus gives to thee his soul. Ah, there it stay'd.

Why should'st thou not? Is not thy soul thine own?

Then write again, *Faustus gives to thee his soul.*

[*Re-enter MEPHISTOPHILIS with a chafer of coals.*]

MEPH. Here's fire. Come, Faustus, set it on.

FAUST. So now the blood begins to clear again;

Now will I make an end immediately. [*Writes.*]

MEPH. O what will not I do to obtain his soul. [*Aside.*]

FAUST. *Consummatus est:*⁶⁰ this bill is ended,
And Faustus hath bequeath'd his soul
to Lucifer—

But what is this inscription on mine arm?

*Homo, fuge!*⁶¹ Whither should I fly?
If unto God, he'll throw me down to hell.

My senses are deceiv'd; here's nothing writ:—

I see it plain; here in this place is writ
Homo fuge! Yet shall not Faustus fly.

MEPH. I'll fetch him somewhat to delight his mind. [Exit.]

[*Re-enter MEPHISTOPHILIS with DEVILS, giving crowns and rich apparel to FAUSTUS, and dance, and then depart.*]

FAUST. Speak, Mephistophilis, what means this show?

MEPH. Nothing, Faustus, but to delight thy mind withal,
And to show thee what magic can perform.

FAUST. But may I raise up spirits when I please?

MEPH. Ay, Faustus, and do greater things than these.

FAUST. Then there's enough for a thousand souls.
Here, Mephistophilis, receive this scroll,
A deed of gift of body and of soul:
But yet conditionally that thou perform

All articles prescrib'd between us both.

MEPH. Faustus, I swear by hell and Lucifer

To effect all promises between us made.

FAUST. Then hear me read them:
On these conditions following. First, that Faustus may be a spirit in form and substance. Secondly, that Mephistophilis shall be his servant, and at his command. Thirdly, that Mephistophilis shall do for him and bring him whatsoever [he desires]. Fourthly, that he shall be in his chamber or house invisible. Lastly, that he shall appear to the said John Faustus, at all times, in what form or shape soever he pleases. I, John Faustus, of Wittenberg, Doc-

⁶⁰ "It is finished."

⁶¹ "Man, fly!"

tor, by these presents do give both body and soul to Lucifer, Prince of the East, and his minister, Mephistophilis; and furthermore grant unto them, that twenty-four years being expired, the articles above written inviolate, full power to fetch or carry the said John Faustus, body and soul, flesh, blood, or goods, into their habitation wheresoever. By me, John Faustus.

MEPH. Speak, Faustus, do you deliver this as your deed?

FAUST. Ay, take it, and the Devil give thee good on't.

MEPH. Now, Faustus, ask what thou wilt.

FAUST. First will I question with thee about hell.

Tell me where is the place that men call hell?

MEPH. Under the heavens.

FAUST. Ay, but whereabouts?

MEPH. Within the bowels of these elements,

Where we are tortur'd and remain for ever;

Hell hath no limits, nor is circumscrib'd

In one self place; for where we are is hell,

And where hell is there must we ever be:

And, to conclude, when all the world dissolves,

And every creature shall be purified,
All places shall be hell that is not Heaven.

FAUST. Come, I think hell's a fable.

MEPH. Ay, think so still, till experience change thy mind.

FAUST. Why, think'st thou then that Faustus shall be damn'd?

MEPH. Ay, of necessity, for here's the scroll

Wherein thou hast given thy soul to Lucifer.

FAUST. Ay, and body too; but what of that?

Think'st thou that Faustus is so fond⁶² to imagine

That, after this life, there is any pain?
Tush; these are trifles, and mere old wives' tales.

⁶² foolish.

MEPH. But, Faustus, I am an instance to prove the contrary, For I am damnèd, and am now in hell.

FAUST. How! now in hell! Nay, an this be hell, I'll willingly be damn'd here;

What? walking, disputing, &c? But, leaving off this, let me have a wife, The fairest maid in Germany; For I am wanton and lascivious, And cannot live without a wife.

MEPH. How—a wife? I prithee, Faustus, talk not of a wife.

FAUST. Nay, sweet Mephistophilis, fetch me one, for I will have one.

MEPH. Well—thou wilt have one. Sit there till I come: I'll fetch thee a wife in the Devil's name. *[Exit.]*

[Re-enter MEPHISTOPHILIS with a DEVIL dressed like a woman, with fireworks.]

MEPH. Tell [me,] Faustus, how dost thou like thy wife?

FAUST. A plague on her for a hot whore!

MEPH. Tut, Faustus, Marriage is but a ceremonial toy; And if thou lovest me, think no more of it.

I'll cull thee out the fairest courtesans, And bring them every morning to thy bed;

She whom thine eye shall like, thy heart shall have,

Be she as chaste as was Penelope, As wise as Saba,⁶³ or as beautiful As was bright Lucifer before his fall. Here, take this book, peruse it thoroughly: *[Gives a book.]*

The iterating⁶⁴ of these lines brings gold;

The framing of this circle on the ground

Brings whirlwinds, tempests, thunder and lightning;

Pronounce this thrice devoutly to thyself,

And men in armour shall appear to thee,

Ready to execute what thou desir'st.

FAUST. Thanks, Mephistophilis; yet

⁶³ the Queen of Sheba, ⁶⁴ repeating.

fain would I have a book wherein I might behold all spells and incantations, that I might raise up spirits when I please.

MEPH. Here they are, in this book. *[Turns to them.]*

FAUST. Now would I have a book where I might see all characters and planets of the heavens, that I might know their motions and dispositions.

MEPH. Here they are too. *[Turns to them.]*

FAUST. Nay, let me have one book more,—and then I have done,—wherein I might see all plants, herbs, and trees that grow upon the earth.

MEPH. Here they be.

FAUST. O, thou art deceived.

MEPH. Tut, I warrant thee. *[Turns to them.]*
[Exeunt.]

SCENE VI.⁶⁵

[Enter FAUSTUS and MEPHISTOPHILIS.]

FAUST. When I behold the heavens, then I repent, And curse thee, wicked Mephistophilis, Because thou hast depriv'd me of those joys.

MEPH. Why, Faustus, Thinkest thou Heaven is such a glorious thing?

I tell thee 't is not half so fair as thou, Or any man that breathes on earth.

FAUST. How provest thou that?

MEPH. 'Twas made for man, therefore is man more excellent.

FAUST. If it were made for man, 'twas made for me;

I will renounce this magic and repent.

[Enter GOOD ANGEL and EVIL ANGEL.]

G. ANG. Faustus, repent; yet God will pity thee.

E. ANG. Thou art a spirit; God cannot pity thee.

FAUST. Who buzzeth in mine ears I am a spirit?

Be I a devil, yet God may pity me; Ay, God will pity me if I repent.

E. AN. Ay, but Faustus never shall repent. *[Exeunt ANGELS.]*

⁶⁵ The same.

FAUST. My heart's so hard'ned I cannot repent.
 Scarce can I name salvation, faith, or heaven,
 But fearful echoes thunder in mine ears
 "Faustus, thou art damn'd!" Then swords and knives,
 Poison, gun, halters, and envenom'd steel
 Are laid before me to despatch myself,
 And long ere this I should have slain myself,
 Had not sweet pleasure conquer'd deep despair.
 Have I not made blind Homer sing to me
 Of Alexander's love and Œnon's death?
 And hath not he that built the walls of Thebes
 With ravishing sound of his melodious harp,
 Made music with my Mephistophilis?
 Why should I die then, or basely despair?
 I am resolv'd; Faustus shall ne'er repent.
 Come, Mephistophilis, let us dispute again,
 And argue of divine astrology.
 Tell me, are there many heavens above the moon?
 Are all celestial bodies but one globe,
 As is the substance of this centric earth?

MEPH. As are the elements, such are the spheres
 Mutually folded in each other's orb,
 And, Faustus,
 All jointly move upon one axletree
 Whose terminine is term'd the world's wide pole;
 Nor are the names of Saturn, Mars, or Jupiter
 Feign'd, but are erring stars.

FAUST. But tell me, have they all one motion, both *situ et tempore*?⁶⁶

MEPH. All jointly move from east to west in twenty-four hours upon the poles of the world; but differ in their motion upon the poles of the zodiac.

FAUST. Tush!

⁶⁶ "In direction and in time?"

These slender trifles Wagner can decide;
 Hath Mephistophilis no greater skill?
 Who knows not the double motion of the planets?
 The first is finish'd in a natural day;
 The second thus: as Saturn in thirty years;
 Jupiter in twelve; Mars in four; the Sun, Venus, and Mercury, in a year;
 the moon in twenty-eight days.
 Tush, these are freshmen's suppositions.
 But tell me, hath every sphere a dominion or *intelligentia*?

MEPH. Ay.

FAUST. How many heavens, or spheres, are there?

MEPH. Nine: the seven planets, the firmament, and the empyreal heaven.

FAUST. Well, resolve me in this question: Why have we not conjunctions, oppositions, aspects, eclipses, all at one time, but in some years we have more, in some less?

MEPH. *Per inæqualem motum respectu totius.*⁶⁷

FAUST. Well, I am answered. Tell me who made the world.

MEPH. I will not.

FAUST. Sweet Mephistophilis, tell me.

MEPH. Move me not, for I will not tell thee.

FAUST. Villain, have I not bound thee to tell me anything?

MEPH. Ay, that is not against our kingdom; but this is.

Think thou on hell, Faustus, for thou art damn'd.

FAUST. Think, Faustus, upon God that made the world.

MEPH. Remember this.

FAUST. Ay, go, accursèd spirit, to ugly hell.

'Tis thou hast damn'd distressèd Faustus' soul.

Is 't not too late?

[*Re-enter GOOD ANGEL and EVIL ANGEL.*]

E. ANG. Too late.

G. ANG. Never too late, if Faustus can repent.

⁶⁷ "On account of their unequal motion in relation to the whole."

E. ANG. If thou repent, devils shall
tear thee in pieces.

G. ANG. Repent, and they shall
never raze thy skin.

[*Exeunt ANGELS.*]

FAUST. Ah, Christ, my Saviour,
Seek to save distressed Faustus' soul.

[*Enter LUCIFER, BELZEBUB, and
MEPHISTOPHILIS.*]

LUC. Christ cannot save thy soul,
for he is just;
There's none but I have interest in the
same.

FAUST. O, who art thou that look'st
so terrible?

LUC. I am Lucifer,
And this is my companion-prince in
hell.

FAUST. O Faustus! they are come to
fetch away thy soul!

LUC. We come to tell thee thou dost
injure us;

Thou talk'st of Christ contrary to thy
promise;

Thou should'st not think of God: think
of the Devil,

And of his dam, too.

FAUST. Nor will I henceforth: par-
don me in this,

And Faustus vows never to look to
Heaven,

Never to name God, or to pray to him,
To burn his Scriptures, slay his minis-
ters,

And make my spirits pull his churches
down.

LUC. Do so, and we will highly
gratify thee. Faustus, we are come
from hell to show thee some pastime.
Sit down, and thou shalt see all the
Seven Deadly Sins appear in their
proper shapes.

FAUST. That sight will be pleasing
unto me,

As Paradise was to Adam the first day
Of his creation.

LUC. Talk not of Paradise nor crea-
tion, but mark this show: talk of the
Devil, and nothing else.—Come away.

[*Enter the SEVEN DEADLY SINS.*]

Now, Faustus, examine them of their
several names and dispositions.

FAUST. What art thou—the first?

PRIDE. I am Pride. I disdain to
have any parents. I am like to Ovid's
flea: I can creep into every corner of
a wench; sometimes, like a periwig, I
sit upon her brow; or like a fan of
feathers, I kiss her lips; indeed I do
—what do I not? But, fie, what a
scent is here! I'll not speak another
word, except the ground were per-
fum'd, and covered with cloth of arras.

FAUST. What art thou—the second?

COVET. I am Covetousness, begot-
ten of an old churl in an old leathern
bag; and might I have my wish I would
desire that this house and all the peo-
ple in it were turn'd to gold, that I
might lock you up in my good chest.
O, my sweet gold!

FAUST. What art thou—the third?

WRATH. I am Wrath. I had neither
father nor mother: I leapt out of a
lion's mouth when I was scarce half an
hour old; and ever since I have run up
and down the world with this case⁶⁸ of
rapiers wounding myself when I had
nobody to fight withal. I was born in
hell; and look to it, for some of you
shall be my father.

FAUST. What art thou—the fourth?

ENVY. I am Envy, begotten of a
chimney sweeper and an oyster-wife.
I cannot read, and therefore wish all
books were burnt. I am lean with see-
ing others eat. O that there would
come a famine through all the world,
that all might die, and I live alone!
then thou should'st see how fat I would
be. But must thou sit and I stand!
Come down with a vengeance!

FAUST. Away, envious rascal! What
art thou—the fifth?

GLUT. Who, I, sir? I am Gluttony.
My parents are all dead, and the devil
a penny they have left me, but a bare
pension, and that is thirty meals a day
and ten bevers⁶⁹—a small trifle to
suffice nature. O, I come of a royal
parentage! My grandfather was a
Gammon of Bacon, my grandmother a
Hogshead of Claret-wine; my god-
fathers were these, Peter Pickleherring,

⁶⁸ pair.

⁶⁹ refreshments between meals.

and Martin Martlemas-beef.⁷⁰ O, but my godmother, she was a jolly gentlewoman, and well beloved in every good town and city; her name was Mistress Margery Marchbeer. Now, Faustus, thou hast heard all my progeny, wilt thou bid me to supper?

FAUST. No, I'll see thee hanged: thou wilt eat up all my victuals.

GLUT. Then the Devil choke thee!

FAUST. Choke thyself, glutton! Who art thou—the sixth?

SLOTH. I am Sloth. I was begotten on a sunny bank, where I have lain ever since; and you have done me great injury to bring me from thence: let me be carried thither again by Gluttony and Lechery. I'll not speak another word for a king's ransom.

FAUST. What are you, Mistress Minx, the seventh and last?

LECH. Who, I, sir? I am one that loves an inch of raw mutton better than an ell of fried stockfish; and the first letter of my name begins with Lechery.

LUC. Away to hell, to hell!

[*Exeunt the SINS.*]

—Now, Faustus, how dost thou like this?

FAUST. O, this feeds my soul!

LUC. Tut, Faustus, in hell is all manner of delight.

FAUST. O might I see hell, and return again.

How happy were I then!

LUC. Thou shalt; I will send for thee at midnight.

In the meantime take this book; peruse it thoroughly, And thou shalt turn thyself into what shape thou wilt.

FAUST. Great thanks, mighty Lucifer!

This will I keep as chary as my life.

LUC. Farewell, Faustus, and think on the Devil.

FAUST. Farewell, great Lucifer! Come, Mephistophilis.

[*Exeunt omnes.*]

⁷⁰ Martlemas or Martinmas was "the customary time for hanging up provisions to dry which had been salted for the winter." (Nares.)

[*Enter WAGNER.*] ⁷¹

WAGNER. Learned Faustus,
To know the secrets of astronomy,
Graven in the book of Jove's high
firmament,
Did mount himself to scale Olympus'
top,
Being seated in a chariot burning
bright,
Drawn by the strength of yoky dragons'
necks.

He now is gone to prove cosmography,
And, as I guess, will first arrive at
Rome,
To see the Pope and manner of his
court,
And take some part of holy Peter's
feast,
That to this day is highly solemn's'd.

[*Exit.*]

SCENE VII.⁷²

[*Enter FAUSTUS and MEPHISTOPHILIS.*]

FAUST. Having now, my good
Mephistophilis,
Past with delight the stately town of
Trier,⁷³
Environ'd round with airy mountain-
tops,

With walls of flint, and deep entrenched
lakes,
Not to be won by any conquering
prince;
From Paris next, coasting the realm of
France,

We saw the river Maine fall into Rhine,
Whose banks are set with groves of
fruitful vines;

Then up to Naples, rich Campania,
Whose buildings fair and gorgeous to
the eye,

The streets straight forth, and pav'd
with finest brick,

Quarter the town in four equivalents.
There saw we learned Maro's ⁷⁴ golden
tomb,

The way he cut, an English mile in
length,

⁷¹ Later edd. give this speech to Chorus.

⁷² The Pope's Privy-chamber.

⁷³ Treves.

⁷⁴ Virgil, who was reputed a magician in the Middle Ages, was buried at Naples.

Thorough a rock of stone in one night's space;
 From thence to Venice, Padua, and the rest,
 In one of which a sumptuous temple stands,
 That threatens the stars with her aspiring top,
 Thus hitherto has Faustus spent his time:
 But tell me, now, what resting-place is this?
 Hast thou, as erst I did command,
 Conducted me within the walls of Rome?

MEPH. Faustus, I have; and because we will not be unprovided, I have taken up ⁷⁵ his Holiness' privy-chamber for our use.

FAUST. I hope his Holiness will bid us welcome.

MEPH. Tut, 'tis no matter, man, we'll be bold with his good cheer. And now, my Faustus, that thou may'st perceive

What Rome containeth to delight thee with,

Know that this city stands upon seven hills

That underprop the groundwork of the same.

[Just through the midst runs flowing Tiber's stream,

With winding banks that cut it in two parts:]

Over the which four stately bridges lean,

That make safe passage to each part of Rome:

Upon the bridge call'd Ponto Angelo Erected is a castle passing strong,

Within whose walls such store of ordnance are,

And double cannons, fram'd of carvèd brass,

As match the days within one complete year;

Besides the gates and high pyramides, Which Julius Cæsar brought from Africa.

FAUST. Now by the kingdoms of infernal rule,

Of Styx, of Acheron, and the fiery lake

⁷⁵ engaged.

Of ever-burning Phlegethon, I swear That I do long to see the monuments And situation of bright-splendent Rome:

Come therefore, let's away.

MEPH. Nay, Faustus, stay; I know you'd fain see the Pope, And take some part of holy Peter's feast,

Where thou shalt see a troop of bald-pate friars,

Whose *summum bonum* is in belly-cheer.

FAUST. Well, I'm content to compass then some sport,

And by their folly make us merriment. Then charm me, [Mephistophilis,] that

I

May be invisible, to do what I please Unseen of any whilst I stay in Rome.

[MEPHISTOPHILIS charms him.]

MEPH. So, Faustus, now Do what thou wilt, thou shalt not be discern'd.

[*Sound a sennet.*⁷⁶ Enter THE POPE and THE CARDINAL OF LORRAIN to the banquet, with FRIARS attending.]

POPE. My Lord of Lorrain, wilt please you draw near?

FAUST. Fall to, and the devil choke you an ⁷⁷ you spare!

POPE. How now! Who's that which spake?—Friars, look about.

1 FRIAR. Here's nobody, if it like your Holiness.

POPE. My lord, here is a dainty dish was sent me from the Bishop of Milan.

FAUST. I thank you, sir.

[*Snatches it.*]

POPE. How now! Who's that which snatch'd the meat from me? Will no

man look? My Lord, this dish was sent me from the Cardinal of Florence.

FAUST. You say true; I'll ha't.

[*Snatches it.*]

POPE. What, again! My lord, I'll drink to your Grace.

FAUST. I'll pledge your Grace.

[*Snatches the cup.*]

⁷⁶ "A particular set of notes on the trumpet or cornet, different from a flourish." (Nares.)

⁷⁷ if.

C. OF LOR. My lord, it may be some ghost newly crept out of purgatory, come to beg a pardon of your Holiness.

POPE. It may be so. Friars, prepare a dirge to lay the fury of this ghost. Once again, my lord, fall to.

[THE POPE crosseth himself.]

FAUST. What, are you crossing of yourself?

Well, use that trick no more I would advise you.

[THE POPE crosses himself again.]

Well, there's the second time. Aware the third,

I give you fair warning.

[THE POPE crosses himself again, and FAUSTUS hits him a box of the ear; and they all run away.]

Come on, Mephistophilis, what shall we do?

MEPH. Nay, I know not. We shall be curs'd with bell, book, and candle.

FAUST. How! bell, book, and candle, —candle, book, and bell,

Forward and backward to curse Faustus to hell!

Anon you shall hear a hog grunt, a calf bleat, and an ass bray,

Because it is Saint Peter's holiday.

[Re-enter all the FRIARS to sing the Dirge.]

1 FRIAR. Come, brethren, let's about our business with good devotion.

[They sing:]

Curs'd be he that stole away his Holiness' meat from the table! *Maledicat Dominus!*⁷⁸

Curs'd be he that struck his Holiness a blow on the face! *Maledicat Dominus!*

Curs'd be he that took Friar Sandelo a blow on the pate! *Maledicat Dominus!*

Curs'd be he that disturbeth our holy dirge! *Maledicat Dominus!*

Curs'd be he that took away his Holiness' wine! *Maledicat Dominus! Et omnes sancti!*⁷⁹ Amen!

[MEPHISTOPHILIS and FAUSTUS beat the

FRIARS, and fling fire-works among them: and so exeunt.]

[Enter CHORUS.]

CHORUS. When Faustus had with pleasure ta'en the view

Of rarest things, and royal courts of kings,

He stay'd his course, and so return'd home;

Where such as bear his absence but with grief,

I mean his friends, and near'st companions,

Did gratulate his safety with kind words,

And in their conference of what befell, Touching his journey through the world and air,

They put forth questions of Astrology, Which Faustus answer'd with such learned skill,

As they admir'd and wond'ring at his wit.

Now is his fame spread forth in every land;

Amongst the rest the Emperor is one, Carolus the Fifth, at whose palace now Faustus is feasted 'mongst his noble-men.

What there he did in trial of his art, I leave untold—your eyes shall see perform'd. [Exit.]

SCENE VIII.⁸⁰

[Enter ROBIN, the Ostler, with a book in his hand.]

ROBIN. O, this is admirable! here I ha' stolen one of Dr. Faustus' conjuring books, and i' faith I mean to search some circles for my own use. Now will I make all the maidens in our parish dance at my pleasure, stark naked before me; and so by that means I shall see more than e'er I felt or saw yet.

[Enter RALPH calling ROBIN.]

RALPH. Robin, prithe come away; there's a gentleman tarries to have his

⁸⁰ an inn-yard.

⁷⁸ "May the Lord curse him."

⁷⁹ "And all the saints."

horse, and he would have his things rubb'd and made clean. He keeps such a chafing with my mistress about it; and she has sent me to look thee out. Prithee come away.

ROBIN. Keep out, keep out, or else you are blown up; you are dismembred, Ralph: keep out, for I am about a roaring piece of work.

RALPH. Come, what dost thou with that same book? Thou canst not read.

ROBIN. Yes, my master and mistress shall find that I can read, he for his forehead, she for her private study; she's born to bear with me, or else my art fails.

RALPH. Why, Robin, what book is that?

ROBIN. What book! Why, the most intolerable book for conjuring that e'er was invented by any brimstone devil.

RALPH. Canst thou conjure with it?

ROBIN. I can do all these things easily with it: first, I can make thee drunk with hippocras⁸¹ at any tavern in Europe for nothing; that's one of my conjuring works.

RALPH. Our Master Parson says that's nothing.

ROBIN. True, Ralph; and more, Ralph, if thou hast any mind to Nan Spit, our kitchenmaid, then turn her and wind her to thy own use as often as thou wilt, and at midnight.

RALPH. O brave Robin, shall I have Nan Spit, and to mine own use? On that condition I'll feed thy devil with horsebread as long as he lives, of free cost.

ROBIN. No more, sweet Ralph: let's go and make clean our boots, which lie foul upon our hands, and then to our conjuring in the Devil's name.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE IX.⁸²

[*Enter ROBIN and RALPH with a silver goblet.*]

ROBIN. Come, Ralph, did not I tell thee we were for ever made by this

⁸¹ wine mixed with sugar and spices.

⁸² An Inn.

Doctor Faustus' book? *Ecce signum*, here's a simple purchase⁸³ for house-keepers; our horses shall eat no hay as long as this lasts.

[*Enter the VINTNER.*]

RALPH. But, Robin, here comes the vintner.

ROBIN. Hush! I'll gull him supernaturally. Drawer, I hope all is paid: God be with you. Come, Ralph.

VINT. Soft, sir; a word with you. I must yet have a goblet paid from you, ere you go.

ROBIN. I, a goblet, Ralph; I, a goblet! I scorn you, and you are but a⁸⁴ &c. I, a goblet! search me.

VINT. I mean so, sir, with your favour. [*Searches him.*]

ROBIN. How say you now?

VINT. I must say somewhat to your fellow. You, sir!

RALPH. Me, sir! me, sir! search your fill. [*VINTNER searches him.*] Now, sir, you may be ashamed to burden honest men with a matter of truth.

VINT. Well, t' one of you hath this goblet about you.

ROBIN. [*aside.*] You lie, drawer, 'tis afore me.—Sirrah you, I'll teach ye to impeach honest men; stand by;—I'll scour you for a goblet!—stand aside you had best, I charge you in the name of Belzebub. Look to the goblet, Ralph. [*Aside to RALPH.*]

VINT. What mean you, sirrah?

ROBIN. I'll tell you what I mean. [*reads from a book.*] *Sanctobulorum, Periphrasticon*—Nay, I'll tickle you, vintner. Look to the goblet, Ralph. [*aside to RALPH.*] *Polypragmos Belseborams framanto pacostiphos tostu, Mephistophilis, &c.* [*Reads.*]

[*Enter MEPHISTOPHILIS, sets squabs at their backs, and then exit. They run about.*]

VINT. O nomine Domini!⁸⁵ what meanest thou, Robin? Thou hast no goblet.

⁸³ gain.

⁸⁴ The abuse was left to the actor's inventiveness.

⁸⁵ "In the name of the Lord."

RALPH. *Peccatum peccatorum!*⁸⁸
Here's thy goblet, good vintner.

[*Gives the goblet to*
VINTNER, *who exit.*]

ROBIN. *Misericordia pro nobis!*⁸⁷
What shall I do? Good Devil, forgive
me now, and I'll never rob thy library
more.

[*Re-enter to them* MEPHISTOPHILIS.]

MEPH. Monarch of hell, under
whose black survey
Great potentates do kneel with awful
fear,
Upon whose altars thousand souls do
lie,
How am I vexèd with these villains'
charms?
From Constantinople am I hither come
Only for pleasure of these damnèd
slaves.

ROBIN. How from Constantinople?
You have had a great journey. Will
you take sixpence in your purse to pay
for your supper, and begone?

MEPH. Well, villains, for your pre-
sumption, I transform thee into an ape,
and thee into a dog; and so begone.

[*Exit.*]

ROBIN. How, into an ape? That's
brave! I'll have fine sport with the
boys. I'll get nuts and apples enow.

RALPH. And I must be a dog.

ROBIN. I' faith thy head will never
be out of the pottage pot. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE X.⁸⁹

[*Enter* EMPEROR, FAUSTUS, *and a*
KNIGHT *with attendants.*]

EMP. Master Doctor Faustus, I
have heard strange report of thy knowl-
edge in the black art, how that none
in my empire nor in the whole world
can compare with thee for the rare
effects of magic; they say thou hast a
familiar spirit, by whom thou canst ac-
complish what thou list. This, there-
fore, is my request, that thou let me
see some proof of thy skill, that mine
eyes may be witnesses to confirm what
mine ears have heard reported; and

here I swear to thee by the honour of
mine imperial crown, that, whatever
thou doest, thou shalt be no ways preju-
diced or endamaged.

KNIGHT. I' faith he looks much like
a conjuror. [*Aside.*]

FAUST. My gracious sovereign,
though I must confess myself far in-
ferior to the report men have published,
and nothing answerable⁸⁹ to the honour
of your imperial majesty, yet for that
love and duty binds me thereunto, I
am content to do whatsoever your maj-
esty shall command me.

EMP. Then, Doctor Faustus, mark
what I shall say.

As I was sometimes solitary set
Within my closet, sundry thoughts
arose

About the honour of mine ancestors,
How they had won by prowess such
exploits,

Got such riches, subdued so many king-
doms,

As we that do succeed, or they that
shall

Hereafter possess our throne, shall
(I fear me) ne'er attain to that degree
Of high renown and great authority;

Amongst which kings is Alexander the
Great,

Chief spectacle of the world's pre-
eminence,

The bright shining of whose glorious
acts

Lightens the world with his⁹⁰ reflecting
beams,

As, when I heard but motion⁹¹ made
of him,

It grieves my soul I never saw the man.
If, therefore, thou by cunning of thine
art

Canst raise this man from hollow vaults
below,

Where lies entomb'd this famous con-
queror,

And bring with him his beauteous para-
mour,

Both in their right shapes, gesture, and
attire

They us'd to wear during their time of
life,

Thou shalt both satisfy my just desire,

⁸⁸ proportionate. ⁸⁹ its. ⁹⁰ mention.

⁸⁸ "Sin of sins." ⁸⁷ "Mercy on us."

⁸⁹ The Court of the Emperor.

And give me cause to praise thee whilst
I live.

FAUST. My gracious lord, I am ready to accomplish your request so far forth as by art, and power of my Spirit, I am able to perform.

KNIGHT. I' faith that's just nothing at all. [Aside.]

FAUST. But, if it like your Grace, it is not in my ability to present before your eyes the true substantial bodies of those two deceased princes, which long since are consumed to dust.

KNIGHT. Ay, marry, Master Doctor, now there's a sign of grace in you, when you will confess the truth.

[Aside.]
FAUST. But such spirits as can lively resemble Alexander and his paramour shall appear before your Grace in that manner that they best liv'd in, in their most flourishing estate; which, I doubt not shall sufficiently content your imperial majesty.

EMP. Go to, Master Doctor, let me see them presently.

KNIGHT. Do you hear, Master Doctor? You bring Alexander and his paramour before the Emperor!

FAUST. How then, sir?

KNIGHT. I' faith that's as true as Diana turn'd me to a stag!

FAUST. No, sir, but when Actæon died, he left the horns for you. Mephistophilis, begone.

[Exit MEPHISTOPHILIS.]

KNIGHT. Nay, an you go to conjuring, I'll begone. [Exit.]

FAUST. I'll meet with you anon for interrupting me so. Here they are, my gracious lord.

[Re-enter MEPHISTOPHILIS with SPIRITS in the shape of ALEXANDER and his PARAMOUR.]

EMP. Master Doctor, I heard this lady while she liv'd had a wart or mole in her neck: how shall I know whether it be so or no?

FAUST. Your Highness may boldly go and see. [Exeunt SPIRITS.]

EMP. Sure these are no spirits, but the true substantial bodies of those two deceased princes.

FAUST. Will 't please your Highness now to send for the knight that was so pleasant with me here of late?

EMP. One of you call him forth.

[Exit ATTENDANT.]

[Re-enter the KNIGHT with a pair of horns on his head.]

How now, sir knight! why I had thought that had'st been a bachelor, but now I see thou hast a wife, that not only gives thee horns, but makes thee wear them. Feel on thy head.

KNIGHT. Thou damnèd wretch and execrable dog,

Bred in the concave of some monstrous rock,

How darest thou thus abuse a gentleman?

Villain, I say, undo what thou hast done!

FAUST. O, not so fast, sir; there's no haste; but, good, are you rememb'red how you crossed me in my conference with the Emperor? I think I have met with you for it.

EMP. Good Master Doctor, at my entreaty release him; he hath done penance sufficient.

FAUST. My gracious lord, not so much for the injury he off'red me here in your presence, as to delight you with some mirth; hath Faustus worthily requited this injurious knight; which, being all I desire, I am content to release him of his horns: and, sir knight, hereafter speak well of scholars. Mephistophilis, transform him straight. [MEPHISTOPHILIS removes the horns.] Now, my good lord, having done my duty, I humbly take my leave.

EMP. Farewell, Master Doctor; yet, ere you go,

Expect from me a bounteous reward.

[Exeunt.]

SCENE XI.²²

[Enter FAUSTUS and MEPHISTOPHILIS.]

FAUST. Now, Mephistophilis, the restless course

²² A Green; afterwards, the house of Faustus.

That Time doth run with calm and
silent foot,
Short'ning my days and thread of vital
life,
Calls for the payment of my latest
years;

Therefore, sweet Mephistophilis, let us
Make haste to Wittenberg.

MEPH. What, will you go on horse-
back or on foot?

FAUST. Nay, till I'm past this fair
and pleasant green,
I'll walk on foot.

[Enter HORSE-COURSER.]

HORSE-C. I have been all this day
seeking one Master Faustian: mass, see
where he is! God save you, Master
Doctor!

FAUST. What, horse-courser! You
are well met.

HORSE-C. Do you hear, sir? I have
brought you forty dollars for your
horse.

FAUST. I cannot sell him so: if thou
likest him for fifty, take him.

HORSE-C. Alas, sir, I have no more.
—I pray you speak for me.

MEPH. I pray you let him have
him: he is an honest fellow, and he has
a great charge, neither wife nor child.

FAUST. Well, come, give me your
money. [HORSE-COURSER gives FAUST
the money.] My boy will deliver
him to you. But I must tell you one
thing before you have him; ride him not
into the water at any hand.

HORSE-C. Why, sir, will he not
drink of all waters?

FAUST. O yes, he will drink of all
waters, but ride him not into the water:
ride him over hedge or ditch, or where
thou wilt, but not into the water.

HORSE-C. Well, sir.—Now I am
made man forever. I'll not leave my
horse for forty. If he had but the qual-
ity of hey-ding-ding, hey-ding-ding,
I'd make a brave living on him: he
has a buttock as slick as an eel.
[Aside.] Well, God b' wi' ye, sir, your
boy will deliver him me: but hark ye,
sir; if my horse be sick or ill at ease,
if I bring his water to you, you'll tell
me what it is? [Exit HORSE-COURSER.]

FAUST. Away, you villain; what,
dost think I am a horse-doctor?
What art thou, Faustus, but a man
condemn'd to die?

Thy fatal time doth draw to final end;
Despair doth drive distrust unto my
thoughts:

Confound these passions with a quiet
sleep:

Tush, Christ did call the thief upon the
cross;

Then rest thee, Faustus, quiet in con-
ceit. [Sleeps in his chair.]

[Re-enter HORSE-COURSER, all wet,
crying.]

HORSE-C. Alas, alas! Doctor Fus-
tian, quotha? Mass, Doctor Lopus⁹³
was never such a doctor. Has given
me a purgation has purg'd me of forty
dollars; I shall never see them more.
But yet, like an ass as I was, I would
not be ruled by him, for he bade me I
should ride him into no water. Now
I, thinking my horse had had some rare
quality that he would not have had
me known of, I, like a venturesome youth,
rid him into the deep pond at the town's
end. I was no sooner in the middle of
the pond, but my horse vanish'd away,
and I sat upon a bottle of hay, never
so near drowning in my life. But I'll
seek out my Doctor, and have my forty
dollars again, or I'll make it the dearest
horse!—O, yonder is his snipper-
snapper.—Do you hear? You hey-
pass,⁹⁴ where's your master?

MEPH. Why, sir, what would you?
You cannot speak with him.

HORSE-C. But I will speak with
him.

MEPH. Why, he's fast asleep. Come
some other time.

HORSE-C. I'll speak with him now,
or I'll break his glass windows about
his ears.

MEPH. I tell thee he has not slept
this eight nights.

HORSE-C. An he have not slept this
eight weeks, I'll speak with him.

⁹³ Dr. Lopez, physician to Queen Elizabeth,
hanged in 1594 on the charge of conspiring
to poison the Queen.

⁹⁴ A juggler's term, like "presto, fly!" Hence
applied to the juggler himself. (Bullen.)

MEPH. See where he is, fast asleep.

HORSE-C. Ay, this is he. God save you, Master Doctor! Master Doctor, Master Doctor Fustian!—Forty dollars, forty dollars for a bottle of hay!

MEPH. Why, thou seest he hears thee not.

HORSE-C. So ho, ho!—so ho, ho! [*hollas in his ear.*] No, will you not wake? I'll make you wake ere I go. [*pulls FAUSTUS by the leg, and pulls it away.*] Alas, I am undone! What shall I do?

FAUST. O my leg, my leg! Help, Mephistophilis! call the officers. My leg, my leg!

MEPH. Come, villain, to the constable.

HORSE-C. O lord, sir, let me go, and I'll give you forty dollars more.

MEPH. Where be they?

HORSE-C. I have none about me. Come to my ostry⁹⁵ and I'll give them you.

MEPH. Begone quickly.

[*HORSE-COURSER runs away.*]

FAUST. What, is he gone? Farewell he! Faustus has his leg again, and the horse-courser, I take it, a bottle of hay for his labour. Well, this trick shall cost him forty dollars more.

[*Enter WAGNER.*]

How now, Wagner; what's the news with thee?

WAG. Sir, the Duke of Vanholt doth earnestly entreat your company.

FAUST. The Duke of Vanholt! an honourable gentleman, to whom I must be no niggard of my cunning. Come, Mephistophilis, let's away to him.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE XII.⁹⁶

[*Enter THE DUKE OF VANHOLT, THE DUCHESS, FAUSTUS, and MEPHISTOPHILIS.*]

DUKE. Believe me, Master Doctor, this merriment hath much pleased me.

FAUSTUS. My gracious lord, I am glad it contents you so well.—But it

may be, madam, you take no delight in this. I have heard that great-bellied women do long for some dainties or other. What is it, madam? Tell me, and you shall have it.

DUCHESS. Thanks, good Master Doctor; and for I see your courteous intent to pleasure me, I will not hide from you the thing my heart desires; and were it now summer, as it is January and the dead time of the winter, I would desire no better meat than a dish of ripe grapes.

FAUST. Alas, madam, that's nothing! Mephistophilis, begone.

[*Exit MEPHISTOPHILIS.*]

Were it a greater thing than this, so it would content you, you should have it.

[*Re-enter MEPHISTOPHILIS with the grapes.*]

Here they be, madam; wilt please you taste on them?

DUKE. Believe me, Master Doctor, this makes me wonder above the rest, that being in the dead time of winter, and in the month of January, how you should come by these grapes.

FAUST. If it like your Grace, the year is divided into two circles over the whole world, that, when it is here winter with us, in the contrary circle it is summer with them, as in India, Saba, and farther countries in the East; and by means of a swift spirit that I have, I had them brought hither, as ye see.—How do you like them, madam; be they good?

DUCHESS. Believe me, Master Doctor, they be the best grapes that I e'er tasted in my life before.

FAUST. I am glad they content you so, madam.

DUKE. Come, madam, let us in, where you must well reward this learned man for the great kindness he hath show'd to you.

DUCHESS. And so I will, my lord; and whilst I live, rest beholding for this courtesy.

FAUST. I humbly thank your Grace.

DUKE. Come, Master Doctor, follow us and receive your reward.

[*Exeunt.*]

⁹⁵ inn.

⁹⁶ The Court of the Duke of Vanholt.

SCENE XIII.*

[Enter WAGNER, *solus*.]

WAG. I think my master means to die shortly,
For he hath given to me all his goods;
And yet, methinks, if that death were near,
He would not banquet and carouse and swill
Amongst the students, as even now he doth,
Who are at supper with such belly-cheer
As Wagner ne'er beheld in all his life.
See where they come! Belike the feast is ended.

[Enter FAUSTUS, with two or three SCHOLARS and MEPHISTOPHILIS.]

1 SCHOL. Master Doctor Faustus, since our conference about fair ladies, which was the beautifullest in all the world, we have determined with ourselves that Helen of Greece was the admirablest lady that ever lived; therefore, Master Doctor, if you will do us that favour, as to let us see that peerless dame of Greece, whom all the world admires for majesty, we should think ourselves much beholding unto you.

FAUST. Gentlemen,
For that I know your friendship is unfeigned,
And Faustus' custom is not to deny
The just requests of those that wish him well,
You shall behold that peerless dame of Greece,
No otherways for pomp and majesty
Than when Sir Paris cross'd the seas with her,
And brought the spoils to rich Dardania.

Be silent, then, for danger is in words.

[Music sounds, and HELEN passeth over the stage.]

2 SCHOL. Too simple is my wit to tell her praise,
Whom all the world admires for majesty.

* A room in the house of Faustus.

3 SCHOL. No marvel though the angry Greeks pursu'd
With ten years' war the rape of such a queen,
Whose heavenly beauty passeth all compare.

1 SCHOL. Since we have seen the pride of Nature's works,
And only paragon of excellence.

[Enter an OLD MAN.]

Let us depart; and for this glorious deed

Happy and blest be Faustus evermore.

FAUSTUS. Gentlemen, farewell—the same I wish to you.

[Exeunt SCHOLARS and WAGNER.]

OLD MAN. Ah, Doctor Faustus, that I might prevail

To guide thy steps unto the way of life,

By which sweet path thou may'st attain the goal

That shall conduct thee to celestial rest!

Break heart, drop blood, and mingle it with tears,

Tears falling from repentant heaviness
Of thy most vile and loathsome filthiness,

The stench whereof corrupts the inward soul

With such flagitious crimes of heinous sins

As no commiseration may expel,
But mercy, Faustus, of thy Saviour sweet,

Whose blood alone must wash away thy guilt.

FAUST. Where art thou, Faustus?

Wretch, what hast thou done?

Damn'd art thou, Faustus, damn'd; despair and die!

Hell calls for right, and with a roaring voice

Says "Faustus! come! thine hour is [almost] come!"

And Faustus [now] will come to do thee right.

[MEPHISTOPHILIS gives him a dagger.]

OLD MAN. Ah stay, good Faustus, stay thy desperate steps!

I see an angel hovers o'er thy head,
And, with a vial full of precious grace,

Offers to pour the same into thy soul:
Then call for mercy, and avoid despair.

FAUST. Ah, my sweet friend, I feel
Thy words do comfort my distressèd
soul.

Leave me a while to ponder on my sins.

OLD MAN. I go, sweet Faustus, but
with heavy cheer,
Fearing the ruin of thy hopeless soul.

[Exit.]

FAUST. Accursèd Faustus, where is
mercy now?

I do repent; and yet I do despair;
Hell strives with grace for conquest in
my breast:

What shall I do to shun the snares of
death?

MEPH. Thou traitor, Faustus, I ar-
rest thy soul

For disobedience to my sovereign lord;
Revolt, or I'll in piecemeal tear thy
flesh.

FAUST. Sweet Mephistophilis, en-
treat thy lord

To pardon my unjust presumption,
And with my blood again I will confirm
My former vow I made to Lucifer.

MEPH. Do it now then quickly, with
unfeignèd heart,
Lest danger do attend thy drift.

[FAUSTUS stabs his arms and
writes on a paper with his blood.]

FAUST. Torment, sweet friend, that
base and crooked age,⁹⁸
That durst dissuade me from my Luci-
fer,

With greatest torments that our hell
affords.

MEPH. His faith is great, I cannot
touch his soul;

But what I may afflict his body with
I will attempt, which is but little worth.

FAUST. One thing, good servant, let
me crave of thee,

To glut the longing of my heart's de-
sire,—

That I might have unto my paramour
That heavenly Helen, which I saw of
late,

Whose sweet embracings may extin-
guish clean

These thoughts that do dissuade me
from my vow,

⁹⁸ old man.

And keep mine oath I made to Lucifer.

MEPH. Faustus, this or what else
thou shalt desire.

Shall be perform'd in twinkling of an
eye.

[Re-enter HELEN.]

FAUST. Was this the face that
launch'd a thousand ships,
And burnt the topless⁹⁹ towers of
Ilium?

Sweet Helen, make me immortal with
a kiss. [Kisses her.]

Her lips suck¹⁰⁰ forth my soul; see
where it flies!—

Come, Helen, come, give me my soul
again.

Here will I dwell, for Heaven be in
these lips,

And all is dross that is not Helena.

[Enter OLD MAN.]

I will be Paris, and for love of thee,
Instead of Troy, shall Wittenberg be
sack'd;

And I will combat with weak Menelaus,
And wear thy colours on my plumed
crest;

Yea, I will wound Achilles in the heel,
And then return to Helen for a kiss.

Oh, thou art fairer than the evening air
Clad in the beauty of a thousand stars;
Brighter art thou than flaming Jupiter
When he appear'd to hapless Semele:
More lovely than the monarch of the
sky

In wanton Arethusa's azur'd arms:
And none but thou shalt be my para-
mour. [Exeunt.]

OLD MAN. Accursèd Faustus, mis-
erable man,

That from thy soul exclud'st the grace
of Heaven,

And fly'st the throne of his tribunal
seat!

[Enter DEVILS.]

Satan begins to sift me with his pride:
As in this furnace God shall try my
faith,

My faith, vile hell, shall triumph over
thee.

⁹⁹ unsurpassed in height.

¹⁰⁰ Qq1-3 read *suckles*.

Ambitious fiends! see how the heavens
smiles
At your repulse, and laughs your state
to scorn!
Hence, hell! for hence I fly unto my
God. [Exeunt.]

SCENE XIV.²⁰¹

[Enter FAUSTUS with the SCHOLARS.]

FAUST. Ah, gentlemen!

1 SCHOL. What ails Faustus?

FAUST. Ah, my sweet chamber-fellow, had I lived with thee, then had I lived still! but now I die eternally. Look, comes he not, comes he not?

2. SCHOL. What means Faustus?

3 SCHOL. Belike he is grown into some sickness by being over solitary.

1 SCHOL. If it be so, we'll have physicians to cure him. 'Tis but a surfeit. Never fear, man.

FAUST. A surfeit of deadly sin that hath damn'd both body and soul.

2 SCHOL. Yet, Faustus, look up to Heaven; remember God's mercies are infinite.

FAUST. But Faustus' offences can never be pardoned: the serpent that tempted Eve may be saved, but not Faustus. Ah, gentlemen, hear me with patience, and tremble not at my speeches! Though my heart pants and quivers to remember that I have been a student here these thirty years, oh, would I had never seen Wittenberg, never read book! And what wonders I have done, all Germany can witness, yea, the world; for which Faustus hath lost both Germany and the world, yea Heaven itself, Heaven, the seat of God, the throne of the blessed, the kingdom of joy; and must remain in hell for ever, hell, ah, hell, for ever! Sweet friends! what shall become of Faustus being in hell for ever?

3 SCHOL. Yet, Faustus, call on God.

FAUST. On God, whom Faustus hath abjur'd! on God, whom Faustus hath blasphemed! Ah, my God, I would weep, but the Devil draws in my tears. Gush forth blood instead of tears!

²⁰¹ The same.

Yea, life and soul! Oh, he stays my tongue! I would lift up my hands, but see, they hold them, they hold them!

ALL. Who, Faustus?

FAUST. Lucifer and Mephistophilis. Ah, gentlemen, I gave them my soul for my cunning!

ALL. God forbid!

FAUST. God forbade it indeed; but Faustus hath done it. For vain pleasure of twenty-four years hath Faustus lost eternal joy and felicity. I writ them a bill with mine own blood: the date is expired; the time will come, and he will fetch me.

1 SCHOL. Why did not Faustus tell us of this before, that divines might have prayed for thee?

FAUST. Oft have I thought to have done so; but the Devil threat'ned to tear me in pieces if I nam'd God; to fetch both body and soul if I once gave ear to divinity: and now 'tis too late. Gentlemen, away! lest you perish with me.

2 SCHOL. Oh, what shall we do to save Faustus?

FAUST. Talk not of me, but save yourselves, and depart.

3 SCHOL. God will strengthen me. I will stay with Faustus.

1 SCHOL. Tempt not God, sweet friend; but let us into the next room, and there pray for him.

FAUST. Ay, pray for me, pray for me! and what noise soever ye hear, come not unto me, for nothing can rescue me.

2 SCHOL. Pray thou, and we will pray that God may have mercy upon thee.

FAUST. Gentlemen, farewell! If I live till morning I'll visit you: if not—Faustus is gone to hell.

ALL. Faustus, farewell!

[Exeunt SCHOLARS. The clock strikes eleven.]

FAUST. Ah, Faustus,
Now hast thou but one bare hour to live,
And then thou must be damn'd perpetually!
Stand still, you ever-moving spheres of Heaven,

That time may cease, and midnight
never come;
Fair Nature's eye, rise, rise again and
make
Perpetual day; or let this hour be but
A year, a month, a week, a natural day,
That Faustus may repent and save his
soul!

O lente, lente, currite noctis equi! ¹⁰²
The stars move still, ¹⁰³ time runs, the
clock will strike,
The Devil will come, and Faustus must
be damn'd.

O, I'll leap up to my God! Who pulls
me down?

See, see where Christ's blood streams
in the firmament!

One drop would save my soul—half a
drop: ah, my Christ!

Ah, rend not my heart for naming of
my Christ!

Yet will I call on him: O spare me,
Lucifer!—

Where is it now? 'Tis gone; and see
where God

Stretcheth out his arm, and bends his
ireful brows!

Mountain and hills come, come and fall
on me,

And hide me from the heavy wrath of
God!

No! no!

Then will I headlong run into the
earth;

Earth gape! O no, it will not harbour
me!

You stars that reign'd at my nativity,
Whose influence hath allotted death
and hell,

Now draw up Faustus like a foggy mist
Into the entrails of yon labouring
clouds,

That when they vomit forth into the
air,

My limbs may issue from their smoky
mouths,

So that my soul may but ascend to
Heaven.

[*The watch strikes the half-hour.*]

Ah, half the hour is past! 'Twill all
be past anon!

¹⁰² "Run softly, softly, horses of the night."

—Ovid's *Amores*, i. 13.

¹⁰³ without ceasing.

O God!

If thou wilt not have mercy on my
soul,

Yet for Christ's sake whose blood hath
ransom'd me,

Impose some end to my incessant pain;
Let Faustus live in hell a thousand

years—

A hundred thousand, and at last be
sav'd!

O, no end is limited to damnèd souls!
Why wert thou not a creature wanting

soul?

Or why is this immortal that thou hast?
Ah, Pythagoras' metempsychosis! were

that true,

This soul should fly from me, and I
be chang'd

Unto some brutish beast! All beasts
are happy,

For, when they die,

Their souls are soon dissolv'd in ele-
ments;

But mine must live, still to be plagu'd
in hell.

Curst be the parents that engend'red
me!

No, Faustus: curse thyself: curse Luci-
fer

That hath depriv'd thee of the joys of
Heaven.

[*The clock striketh twelve.*]

O, it strikes, it strikes! Now, body
turn to air,

Or Lucifer will bear thee quick to hell.

[*Thunder and lightning.*]

O soul, be chang'd into little water-
drops,

And fall into the ocean—ne'er be found.

My God! my God! look not so fierce
on me!

[*Enter DEVILS.*]

Adders and serpents, let me breathe
awhile!

Ugly hell, gape not! come not, Lucifer!
I'll burn my books!—Ah Mephisto-
philis!

[*Exeunt DEVILS with FAUSTUS.*]

[*Enter CHORUS.*]

CHO. Cut is the branch that might
have grown full straight,

And burnèd is Apollo's laurel bough,

That sometimes grew within this
learned man.

Faustus is gone; regard his hellish
fall,

Whose fiendful fortune may exhort the
wise

Only to wonder at unlawful things,

Whose deepness doth entice such for-
ward wits

To practise more than heavenly power
permits. [Exit.]

*Terminat Hora Diem, Terminat
Author Opus.*

VOLPONE *

OR THE FOX

BEN JONSON

CHARACTERS

VOLPONE, *a Magnifico.*
 MOSCA, *his Parasite.*
 VOLTORE, *an Advocate.*
 CORBACCIO, *an old Gentleman.*
 CORVINO, *a Merchant.*
 BONARIO, *a young Gentleman, son to Corbaccio.*
 SIR POLITIC WOULD-BE, *a Knight.*
 PEREGRINE, *a Gentleman Traveller.*
 NANO, *a Dwarf.*
 CASTRONE, *an Eunuch.*
 ANDROGYNO, *an Hermaphrodite.*
 Grege, *or Mob.*
 Commandadori, *Officers of Justice.*
 Mercatori, *three Merchants.*
 Avocatori, *four Magistrates.*
 Notario, *the Register.*
 FINE MADAME WOULD-BE, *the Knight's wife.*
 CELIA, *CORVINO's wife.*
 Servitore, *a Servant, two Waiting-women, &c.*

SCENE—Venice.

ARGUMENT

Volpone, childless, rich, feigns sick, despairs,
Offers his state to hopes of several heirs,
Lies languishing: his parasite receives
Presents of all, assures, deludes; then weaves
Other cross plots, which ope themselves,
are told.
New tricks for safety are sought; they
thrive: when, bold,
Each tempts th' other again, and all are
sold.

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PROLOGUE

Now, luck yet send us, and a little wit
 Will serve to make our play hit;
 According to the palates of the season,
 Here is rhyme, not empty of reason.
 This we were bid to credit from our
 poet,
 Whose true scope, if you would know
 it,
 In all his poems still hath been this
 measure,
 To mix profit with your pleasure;
 And not as some, whose throats their
 envy failing,
 Cry hoarsely. "All he writes is rail-
 ing:"
 And when his plays come forth, think
 they can flout them,
 With saying, he was a year about
 them.
 To this there needs no lie, but this his
 creature,
 Which was two months since no fea-
 ture:
 And though he dares give them five
 lives to mend it,
 'Tis known, five weeks fully penn'd
 it,
 From his own hand, without a coadju-
 tor,
 Novice, journeyman, or tutor.
 Yet thus much I can give you as a
 token
 Of his play's worth, no eggs are
 broken,
 Nor quaking custards with fierce teeth
 affrighted,
 Wherewith your rout are so de-
 lighted;
 Nor hales he in a gull, old ends recit-
 ing,
 To stop gaps in his loose writing;

With such a deal of monstrous and
forc'd action,

As might make Bethlem¹ a faction:
Nor made he his play for jests stol'n
from each table,

But makes jests to fit his fable;
And so presents quick comedy refin'd,
As best critics have design'd;
The laws of time, place, persons he ob-
serveth,

From no needful rule he swerveth.
All gall and copperas² from his ink he
draineth,

Only a little salt remaineth,
Wherewith he'll rub your cheeks, till,
red with laughter,
They shall look fresh a week after.

ACT I

SCENE I.³

[Enter VOLPONE, MOSCA.]

VOLP. Good morning to the day;
and next, my gold!
Open the shrine, that I may see my
saint.

[MOSCA withdraws the curtain, and dis-
covers piles of gold, plate, jewels, etc.]
Hail the world's soul, and mine! More
glad than is

The teeming earth to see the long'd-for
sun

Peep through the horns of the celestial
Ram,

Am I, to view thy splendour dark'ning
his;

That lying here, amongst my other
hoards,

Show'st like a flame by night, or like
the day

Struck out of chaos, when all darkness
fled

Unto the centre.⁴ O thou son of Sol,
But brighter than thy father, let me
kiss,

With adoration, thee, and every relic
Of sacred treasure in this blessed room.
Well did wise poets, by thy glorious
name,

¹ Bedlam; the madhouse.

² green vitriol, used in making ink.

³ A room in Volpone's house.

⁴ centre of the earth.

Title that age which they would have
the best;

Thou being the best of things, and far
transcending

All style of joy, in children, parents,
friends,

Or any other waking dream on earth:
Thy looks when they to Venus did
'ascribe,

They should have given her twenty
thousand Cupids;

Such are thy beauties and our loves!
Dear saint,

Riches, the dumb god, that giv'st all
men tongues,

That canst do nought, and yet mak'st
men do all things;

The price of souls; even hell, with thee
to boot,

Is made worth heaven. Thou art vir-
tue, fame,

Honour, and all things else. Who can
get thee,

He shall be noble, valiant, honest,
wise——⁵

Mos. And what he will, sir. Riches
are in fortune

A greater good than wisdom is in
nature.

VOLP. True, my beloved Mosca.
Yet I glory

More in the cunning purchase of my
wealth,

Than in the glad possession, since I
gain

No common way; I use no trade, no
venture;

I wound no earth with ploughshares, I
fat no beasts

To feed the shambles; have no mills for
iron,

Oil, corn, or men, to grind them into
powder;

I blow no subtle glass, expose no ships
To threat'nings of the furrow-faced sea;

I turn no monies in the public bank,
No usure private.

Mos. No, sir, nor devour
Soft prodigals. You shall ha' some will
swallow

A melting heir as glibly as your Dutch

⁵ Gifford and others have noted that in this splendid speech Jonson is indebted to Pindar, Euripides, and Horace.

Will pills of butter, and ne'er purge for it;
 Tear forth the fathers of poor families
 Out of their beds, and coffin them alive
 In some kind claspings prison, where
 their bones
 May be forthcoming, when the flesh is
 rotten:
 But your sweet nature doth abhor
 these courses;
 You loathe the widow's or the orphan's
 tears
 Should wash your pavements, or their
 piteous cries
 Ring in your roofs, and beat the air for
 vengeance.

VOLP. Right, Mosca; I do loathe it.
 Mos. And, besides, sir,
 You are not like the thresher that doth
 stand
 With a huge flail, watching a heap of
 corn,
 And, hungry, dares not taste the small-
 est grain,
 But feeds on mallows, and such bitter
 herbs;
 Nor like the merchant, who hath fill'd
 his vaults
 With Romagnia, rich and Candian
 wines,
 Yet drinks the lees of Lombard's vine-
 gar:
 You will not lie in straw, whilst moths
 and worms
 Feed on your sumptuous hangings and
 soft beds;
 You know the use of riches, and dare
 give now
 From that bright heap, to me, your poor
 observer,
 Or to your dwarf, or your hermaphro-
 dite,
 Your ennuh, or what other household
 trifle
 Your pleasure allows maintenance—
 VOL. Hold thee, Mosca,
 Take of my hand; thou strik'st on truth
 in all,
 And they are envious term thee para-
 site.
 Call forth my dwarf, my ennuh, and
 my fool,
 And let 'em make me sport.

[Exit MOSCA.]

What should I do,
 But cocker up my genius, and live free
 To all delights my fortune calls me to?
 I have no wife, no parent, child, ally,
 To give my substance to; but whom I
 make
 Must be my heir; and this makes men
 observe⁶ me:
 This draws new clients daily to my
 house,
 Women and men of every sex and age,
 That bring me presents, send me plate,
 coin, jewels,
 With hope that when I die (which they
 expect
 Each greedy minute) it shall then re-
 turn
 Tenfold upon them; whilst some, covet-
 ous
 Above the rest, seek to engross me
 whole,
 And counter-work the one unto the
 other,
 Contend in gifts, as they would seem in
 love:
 All which I suffer, playing with their
 hopes,
 And am content to coin 'em into profit,
 And look upon their kindness, and take
 more,
 And look on that; still bearing them in
 hand,⁷
 Letting the cherry knock against their
 lips,
 And draw it by their mouths, and back
 again.—
 How now!

SCENE II.*

[To him re-enter MOSCA, with
 NANO, ANDROGYNO, and CAS-
 TRONE.]

NAN. "Now, room for fresh game-
 sters, who do will you to know,
 They do bring you neither play nor
 university show;
 And therefore do intreat you that what-
 soever they rehearse,

⁶ pay obsequious attention to.

⁷ deceiving by false hopes.

⁸ The same. The scene divisions are
 Jonson's.

May not fare a whit the worse, for the false pace of the verse.

If you wonder at this, you will wonder more ere we pass,

For know, here⁹ is¹⁰ inclos'd the soul of Pythagoras,

That juggler divine, as hereafter shall follow;

Which soul, fast and loose, sir, came first from Apollo,

And was breath'd into Aethalides, Mercurius his son,

Where it had the gift to remember all that ever was done.

From thence it fled forth, and made quick transmigration

To goldy-lock'd Euphorbus, who was kill'd in good fashion,

At the siege of old Troy, by the cuckold of Sparta.

Hermotimus was next (I find it in my charta).

To whom it did pass, where no sooner it was missing,

But with one Pyrrhus of Delos it learn'd to go a-fishing;

And thence did it enter the sophist of Greece.

From Pythagore, she went into a beautiful piece,

Hight Aspasia, the meretrix; and the next toss of her

Was again of a whore, she became a philosopher,

Crates the cynick, as itself doth relate it:

Since kings, knights, and beggars, knaves, lords, and fools gat it,

Besides ox and ass, camel, mule, goat, and brock,¹⁰

In all which it hath spoke, as in the cobbler's cock.¹¹

But I come not here to discourse of that matter,

Or his one, two, or three, or his great oath, BY QUATER!¹²

His musics, his trigon,¹³ his golden thigh,

Or his telling how elements shift; but I

Would ask, how of late thou hast suffer'd translation, And shifted thy coat in these days of reformation.

AND. Like one of the reform'd, a fool, as you see,

Counting all old doctrine heresy.

NAN. But not on thine own forbid meats hast thou ventur'd?

AND. On fish, when first a Carthusian I enter'd.

NAN. Why, then thy dogmatical silence hath left thee?

AND. Of that an obstreperous lawyer bereft me.

NAN. O wonderful change, when sir lawyer forsook thee!

For Pythagore's sake, what body then took thee?

AND. A good dull mule.

NAN. And how! by that means Thou wert brought to allow of the eating of beans?

AND. Yes.

NAN. But from the mule into whom didst thou pass?

AND. Into a very strange beast, by some writers call'd an ass;

By others a precise,¹⁴ pure, illuminate brother

Of those devour flesh, and sometimes one another;

And will drop you forth a libel, or a sanctifi'd lie,

Betwixt every spoonful of a nativity-pie.¹⁵

NAN. Now quit thee, for heaven, of that profane nation,

And gently report thy next transmigration.

AND. To the same that I am.

NAN. A creature of delight, And, what is more than a fool, an hermaphrodite!

Now, prithee, sweet soul, in all thy variation,

Which body wouldst thou choose to keep up thy station?

AND. Troth, this I am in: even here would I tarry.

NAN. 'Cause here the delight of each sex thou canst vary?

¹⁴ Puritanical.

¹⁵ Christmas-pie.

⁹ in Androgyno. ¹⁰ badger.

¹¹ This interlude is based on Lucian's dialogue between a cobbler and a cock.

¹² quatre, the four in dice.

¹³ a triangular lyre.

AND. Alas, those pleasures be stale
and forsaken;

No, 't is your fool wherewith I am so
taken,

The only one creature that I can call
blessed;

For all other forms I have prov'd most
distressed.

NAN. Spoke true, as thou wert in
Pythagoras still.

This learned opinion we celebrate will,
Fellow eunuch, as behoves us, with all
our wit and art,

To dignify that whereof ourselves are
so great and special a part."

VOLP. Now, very, very pretty!
Mosca, this

Was thy invention?

Mos. If it please my patron,
Not else.

VOLP. It doth, good Mosca.

Mos. Then it was, sir.

[NANO and CASTRONE sing.]

SONG

"Fools, they are the only nation
Worth men's envy or admiration;
Free from care or sorrow-taking,
Selves and others merry making:
All they speak or do is sterling.
Your fool he is your great man's darling,
And your ladies' sport and pleasure;
Tongue and bauble are his treasure.
E'en his face begetteth laughter,
And he speaks truth free from slaughter;¹⁶
He's the grace of every feast,
And sometimes the chiefest guest;
Hath his trencher and his stool,
When wit waits upon the fool.
O, who would not be
He, he, he?"

[One knocks without.]

VOLP. Who's that? Away! Look,
Mosca. Fool, begone!

[Exeunt NANO, CASTRONE,
and ANDROGYNO.]

Mos. 'T is Signior Voltore, the ad-
vocate;

I know him by his knock.

VOLP. Fetch me my gown,
My furs, and night-caps; say my couch
is changing

And let him entertain himself awhile

¹⁶ with impunity.

Without i' th' gallery. [Exit MOSCA.]

Now, now my clients

Begin their visitation! Vulture, kite,
Raven, and gorcrow,¹⁷ all my birds of
prey,

That think me turning carcase, now
they come:

I am not for 'em yet.

[Re-enter MOSCA, with the gown, etc.]

How now! the news?

Mos. A piece of plate, sir.

VOLP. Of what bigness?

Mos. Huge,

Massy, and antique, with your name
inscrib'd,

And arms engraven.

VOLP. Good! and not a fox
Stretcht on the earth, with fine delu-
sive sleights,

Mocking a gaping crow? ha, Mosca!

Mos. Sharp, sir.

VOLP. Give me my furs.

[Puts on his sick dress.]

Why dost thou laugh so, man?

Mos. I cannot choose, sir, when I
apprehend

What thoughts he has without now, as
he walks:

That this might be the last gift he
should give,

That this would fetch you; if you died
to-day,

And gave him all, what he should be
to-morrow;

What large return would come of all
his ventures;

How he should worshipp'd be, and
reverenc'd;

Ride with his furs, and foot cloths;
waited on

By herds of fools and clients; have
clear way

Made for his mule, as letter'd as him-
self;

Be call'd the great and learned advo-
cate:

And then concludes, there's nought im-
possible.

VOLP. Yes, to be learned, Mosca.

Mos. O, no: rich
Implies it. Hood an ass with reverend
purple,

¹⁷ carrion crow.

So you can hide his two ambitious¹⁸
ears,

And he shall pass for a cathedral
doctor.

VOLP. My caps, my caps, good
Mosca. Fetch him in.

Mos. Stay, sir; your ointment for
your eyes.

VOLP. That's true;
Dispatch, dispatch: I long to have
possession

Of my new present.

Mos. That, and thousands more,
I hope to see you lord of.

VOLP. Thanks, kind Mosca.

Mos. And that, when I am lost in
blended dust,
And hundreds such as I am, in succes-
sion—

VOLP. Nay, that were too much,
Mosca.

Mos. You shall live
Still to delude these harpies.

VOLP. Loving Mosca!
'Tis well: my pillow now, and let him
enter. [*Exit Mosca.*]

Now, my feign'd cough, my phthisic,
and my gout,

My apoplexy, palsy, and catarrhs,
Help, with your forced functions, this
my posture,

Wherein, this three year, I have milk'd
their hopes.

He comes; I hear him—Uh! [*cough-
ing*] uh! uh! uh! O——

SCENE III.¹⁹

[VOLPONE; re-enter MOSCA, intro-
ducing VOLTORE, with a piece of
plate.]

Mos. You still are what you were,
sir. Only you,
Of all the rest, are he commands his
love,

And you do wisely to preserve it thus,
With early visitation, and kind notes
Of your good meaning to him, which, I
know,

Cannot but come most grateful.
Patron! sir!

Here's Signior Voltore is come——

VOLP. [*faintly.*] What say you?

Mos. Sir, Signior Voltore is come
this morning

To visit you.

VOLP. I thank him.

Mos. And hath brought
A piece of antique plate, bought of St.
Mark,²⁰

With which he here presents you.

VOLP. He is welcome.

Pray him to come more often.

Mos. Yes.

VOLT. What says he?

Mos. He thanks you, and desires
you see him often.

VOLP. Mosca.

Mos. My patron!

VOLP. Bring him near, where is he?
I long to feel his hand.

Mos. The plate is here, sir.

VOLT. How fare you, sir?

VOLP. I thank you, Signior Voltore;
Where is the plate? mine eyes are
bad.

VOLT. [*putting it into his hands.*]
I'm sorry

To see you still thus weak.

Mos. [*aside.*] That he's not weaker.

VOLP. You are too munificent.

VOLT. No, sir; would to heaven
I could as well give health to you, as
that plate!

VOLP. You give, sir, what you can; I
thank you. Your love

Hath taste in this, and shall not be un-
answer'd:

I pray you see me often.

VOLT. Yes, I shall, sir.

VOLP. Be not far from me.

Mos. Do you observe that, sir?

VOLP. Hearken unto me still; it will
concern you.

Mos. You are a happy man, sir;
know your good.

VOLP. I cannot now last long——

Mos. [*aside.*] You are his heir, sir.

VOLT. [*aside.*] Am I?

VOLP. I feel me going: Uh! uh!
uh! uh!

¹⁸ with a reference to the etymological sense
of "moving round."

¹⁹ The same.

²⁰ at one of the goldsmith's shops beside St.
Mark's

I'm inscrib'd to my port. Uh! uh! uh!
uh!

And I am glad I am so near my haven.

Mos. Alas, kind gentleman! Well, we must all go——

VOLT. But, Mosca——

Mos. Age will conquer.

VOLT. Prithee, hear me;

Am I inscrib'd his heir for certain?

Mos. Are you!

I do beseech you, sir, you will vouchsafe

To write me i' your family. All my hopes

Depend upon your worship: I am lost

Except the rising sun do shine on me.

VOLT. It shall both shine, and warm thee, Mosca.

Mos. Sir,

I am a man that hath not done your love

All the worst offices: here I wear your keys,

See all your coffers and your caskets lock'd,

Keep the poor inventory of your jewels,

Your plate, and monies; am your steward, sir,

Husband your goods here.

VOLT. But am I sole heir?

Mos. Without a partner, sir: confirm'd this morning:

The wax is warm yet, and the ink scarce dry

Upon the parchment.

VOLT. Happy, happy me!

By what good chance, sweet Mosca?

Mos. Your desert, sir;

I know no second cause.

VOLT. Thy modesty

Is loth to know it; well, we shall requite it.

Mos. He ever lik'd your course, sir; that first took him.

I oft have heard him say how he admir'd

Men of your large profession, that could speak

To every cause, and things mere contraries,

Till they were hoarse again, yet all be law;

That, with most quick agility, could turn,

And return;²¹ make knots, and undo them;

Give forked counsel; take provoking gold

On either hand, and put it up; these men,

He knew, would thrive with their humility.

And, for his part, he thought he should be blest

To have his heir of such a suff'ring spirit,

So wise, so grave, of so perplex'd a tongue,

And loud withal, that would not wag, nor scarce

Lie still, without a fee; when every word

Your worship but lets fall, is a chequin!— [*Another knocks.*]

Who's that? one knocks; I would not have you seen, sir.

And yet—pretend you came and went in haste;

I'll fashion an excuse—and, gentle sir,

When you do come to swim in golden lard,

Up to the arms in honey, that your chin

Is borne up stiff with fatness of the flood,

Think on your vassal; but remember me:

I ha' not been your worst of clients.

VOLT. Mosca!——

Mos. When will you have your inventory brought, sir?

Or see a copy of the will?—Anon!

I'll bring them to you, sir. Away, be gone,

Put business i' your face.

[*Exit VOLTORE.*]

VOLT. [*springing up.*] Excellent Mosca!

Come hither, let me kiss thee.

Mos. Keep you still, sir.

Here is Corbaccio.

VOLT. Set the plate away:

The vulture's gone, and the old raven's come.

²¹ Gifford emends to *re-turn; could.*

SCENE IV.²²

[MOSCA, VOLPONE.]

Mos. Betake you to your silence,
and your sleep.
Stand there and multiply. [*putting the
plate to the rest.*] Now we shall
see
A wretch who is indeed more impotent
Than this can feign to be; yet hopes to
hop
Over his grave.

[Enter CORBACCIO.]

Signior Corbaccio!
You're very welcome, sir.
CORB. How does your patron?
Mos. Troth, as he did, sir; no
amends.
CORB. What! mends he?
Mos. No, sir: he's rather worse.
CORB. That's well. Where is he?
Mos. Upon his couch, sir, newly
fall'n aleep.
CORB. Does he sleep well?
Mos. No wink, sir, all this night,
Nor yesterday; but slumbers.
CORB. Good! he should take
Some counsel of physicians: I have
brought him
An opiate here, from mine own doctor.
Mos. He will not hear of drugs.
CORB. Why? I myself
Stood by while 't was made, saw all th'
ingredients;
And know it cannot but most gently
work:
My life for his, 't is but to make him
sleep.
VOLP. [*aside.*] Ay, his last sleep, if
he would take it.

Mos. Sir,
He has no faith in physic.
CORB. Say you, say you?
Mos. He has no faith in physic: he
does think
Most of your doctors are the greater
danger,
And worse disease, t' escape. I often
have
Heard him protest that your physician
Should never be his heir.

CORB. Not I his heir?

²² The same.

Mos. Not your physician, sir.
CORB. O, no, no, no,
I do not mean it.
Mos. No, sir, nor their fees
He cannot brook: he says they flay a
man
Before they kill him.
CORB. Right, I do conceive you.
Mos. And then they do it by experi-
ment;
For which the law not only doth ab-
solve 'em,
But gives them great reward: and he is
loth
To hire his death so.
CORB. It is true, they kill
With as much licence as a judge.
Mos. Nay, more;
For he but kills, sir, where the law con-
demns,
And these can kill him too.
CORB. Ay, or me;
Or any man. How does his apoplex?
Is that strong on him still?
Mos. Most violent.
His speech is broken, and his eyes are
set,
His face drawn longer than 't was
wont—
CORB. How! how!
Stronger than he was wont?
Mos. No, sir; his face
Drawn longer than 't was wont.
CORB. O, good!
Mos. His mouth
Is ever gaping, and his eyelids hang.
CORB. Good.
Mos. A freezing numbness stiffens
all his joints,
And makes the colour of his flesh like
lead.
CORB. 'T is good.
Mos. His pulse beats slow, and dull.
CORB. Good symptoms still.
Mos. And from his brain—
CORB. Ha? How? Not from his
brain?
Mos. Yes, sir, and from his brain—
CORB. I conceive you; good.
Mos. Flows a cold sweat, with a
continual rheum,
Forth the resolvèd corners of his eyes.
CORB. Is 't possible? Yet I am bet-
ter, ha!

How does he with the swimming of his head?

Mos. O, sir, 't is past the scotomy; ²³ he now

Hath lost his feeling, and hath left to snort:

You hardly can perceive him, that he breathes.

CORB. Excellent, excellent! sure I shall outlast him:

This makes me young again, a score of years.

Mos. I was a-coming for you, sir.

CORB. Has he made his will? What has he giv'n me?

Mos. No, sir.

CORB. Nothing! ha?

Mos. He has not made his will, sir.

CORB. Oh, oh, oh!

What then did Voltore, the lawyer, here?

Mos. He smelt a carcase, sir, when he but heard

My master was about his testament; As I did urge him to it for your good—

CORB. He came unto him, did he? I thought so.

Mos. Yes, and presented him this piece of plate.

CORB. To be his heir?

Mos. I do not know, sir.

CORB. True:

I know it too.

Mos. [*aside.*] By your own scale, sir.

CORB. Well, I shall prevent him yet. See, Mosca, look,

Here I have brought a bag of bright chequins,²⁴

Will quite lay down his plate.

Mos. [*taking the bag.*] Yea, marry, sir.

This is true physic, this your sacred medicine;

No talk of opiates to this great elixir!

CORB. 'Tis *aurum palpabile*, if not *potabile*.

Mos. It shall be minister'd to him in his bowl.

CORB. Ay, do, do, do.

Mos. Most blessed cordial!

This will recover him.

CORB. Yes, do, do, do.

Mos. I think it were not best, sir.

CORB. What?

Mos. To recover him.

CORB. O, no, no, no; by no means.

Mos. Why, sir, this

Will work some strange effect, if he but feel it.

CORB. 'Tis true, therefore forbear; I'll take my venture:

Give me 't again.

Mos. At no hand: pardon me:

You shall not do yourself that wrong, sir. I

Will so advise you, you shall have it all.

CORB. How?

Mos. All, sir; 't is your right, your own; no man

Can claim a part: 't is yours without a rival,

Decreed by destiny.

CORB. How, how, good Mosca?

Mos. I'll tell you, sir. This fit he shall recover,—

CORB. I do conceive you.

Mos. And on first advantage Of his gain'd sense, will I re-importune him

Unto the making of his testament:

And show him this.

[*Pointing to the money.*]

CORB. Good, good.

Mos. 'T is better yet, If you will hear, sir.

CORB. Yes, with all my heart.

Mos. Now would I counsel you, make home with speed;

There, frame a will; whereto you shall inscribe

My master your sole heir.

CORB. And disinherit My son?

Mos. O, sir, the better: for that colour²⁵

Shall make it much more taking.

CORB. O, but colour?

Mos. This will, sir, you shall send it unto me.

²⁵ pretence.

²³ imperfect sight, with giddiness.

²⁴ Ital. *zecchino*, a sequin; a coin worth about two dollars.

Now, when I come to inforce, as I will
do,
Your cares, your watchings, and your
many prayers,
Your more than many gifts, your this
day's present,
And last, produce your will; where,
without thought,
Or least regard, unto your proper
issue,
A son so brave, and highly meriting,
The stream of your diverted love hath
thrown you
Upon my master, and made him your
heir;
He cannot be so stupid, or stone-dead,
But out of conscience and mere grati-
tude——

CORB. He must pronounce me his?

Mos. 'Tis true.

CORB. This plot

Did I think on before.

Mos. I do believe it.

CORB. Do you not believe it?

Mos. Yes, sir,

CORB. Mine own project.

Mos. Which, when he hath done,
sir——

CORB. Publish'd me his heir?

Mos. And you so certain to survive
him——

CORB. Ay.

Mos. Being so lusty a man——

CORB. 'Tis true.

Mos. Yes, sir——

CORB. I thought on that too. See,
how he should be

The very organ to express my thoughts!

Mos. You have not only done your-
self a good——

CORB. But multipli'd it on my
son.

Mos. 'Tis right, sir.

CORB. Still, my invention.

Mos. 'Las, sir! heaven knows,
It hath been all my study, all my
care,

(I e'en grow gray withal,) how to work
things——

CORB. I do conceive, sweet Mosca.

Mos. You are he
For whom I labour here.

CORB. Ay, do, do, do:
I'll straight about it. [Going.]

Mos. [*aside.*] Rook go with you,²⁶
raven!

CORB. I know thee honest.

Mos. You do lie, sir!

CORB. And——

Mos. Your knowledge is no better
than your ears, sir.

CORB. I do not doubt to be a father
to thee.

Mos. Nor I to gull my brother of his
blessing.

CORB. I may ha' my youth restor'd
to me, why not?

Mos. Your worship is a precious
ass!

CORB. What sayst thou?

Mos. I do desire your worship to
make haste, sir.

CORB. 'Tis done, 'tis done; I go.
[*Exit.*]

VOLF. [*leaping from his couch.*] O,
I shall burst!

Let out my sides, let out my sides——

Mos. Contain

Your flux of laughter, sir: you know
this hope

Is such a bait, it covers any hook.

VOLF. O, but thy working, and thy
placing it!

I cannot hold; good rascal, let me kiss
thee:

I never know thee in so rare a
humour.

Mos. Alas, sir, I but do as I am
taught;

Follow your grave instructions; give
'em words;

Pour oil into their ears, and send them
hence. *

VOLF. 'Tis true, 'tis true. What a
rare punishment

Is avarice to itself!

Mos. Ay, with our help, sir.

VOLF. So many cares, so many mala-
dies,

So many fears attending on old age.

Yea, so often call'd on, as no wish

Can be more frequent with 'em, their
limbs faint,

Their senses dull, their seeing, hearing,
going,

All dead before them; yea, their very
teeth,

* May you be rooked, or cheated.

Their instruments of eating, failing them:

Yet this is reckon'd life! Nay, here was one,

Is now gone home, that wishes to live longer!

Feels not his gout, nor palsy; feigns himself

Younger by scores of years, flatters his age

With confident belying it, hopes he may

With charms like Aeson, have his youth restor'd;

And with these thoughts so battens, as if fate

Would be as easily cheated on as he,
And all turns air! Who's that there,
now? a third!

[*Another knocks.*]

Mos. Close, to your couch again; I hear his voice.

It is Corvino, our spruce merchant.

VOLP. [*lies down as before.*] Dead.

Mos. Another bout, sir, with your eyes. [*anointing them.*] Who's there?

SCENE V.²⁷

[*MOSCA, VOLPONE. Enter CORVINO.*]

Signior Corvino! come most wish'd for!

O,

How happy were you, if you knew it, now!

CORV. Why? what? wherein?

Mos. The tardy hour is come, sir.

CORV. He is not dead?

Mos. Not dead, sir, but as good; He knows no man.

CORV. How shall I do then?

Mos. Why, sir?

CORV. I have brought him here a pearl.

Mos. Perhaps he has
So much remembrance left as to know you, sir:

He still calls on you; nothing but your name

Is in his mouth. Is your pearl orient,²⁸ sir?

CORV. Venice was never owner of the like.

VOLP. [*faintly.*] Signior Corvino!

Mos. Hark!

VOLP. Signior Corvino,

Mos. He calls you; step and give it him.—He's here, sir.

And he has brought you a rich pearl.

CORV. How do you, sir?

Tell him it doubles the twelve carat.

Mos. Sir,

He cannot understand, his hearing's gone;

And yet it comforts him to see you——

CORV. Say

I have a diamond for him, too.

Mos. Best show't, sir;

Put it into his hand: 't is only there

He apprehends: he has his feeling yet.

See how he grasps it!

CORV. 'Las, good gentleman!

How pitiful the sight is!

Mos. Tut, forget, sir.

The weeping of an heir should still be laughter

Under a visor.

CORV. Why, am I his heir?

Mos. Sir, I am sworn, I may not show the will

Till he be dead; but here has been Corbaccio,

Here has been Voltore, here were others too,

I cannot number 'em, they were so many;

All gaping here for legacies: but I,

Taking the vantage of his naming you,

Signior Corvino, Signior Corvino, took

Paper, and pen, and ink, and there I ask'd him

Whom he would have his heir! *Corvino*. Who

Should be executor? *Corvino*. And

To any question he was silent to,

I still interpreted the nods he made,

Through weakness, for consent: and sent home th' others,

Nothing bequeath'd them, but to cry and curse.

CORV. O, my dear Mosca. [*they embrace.*] Does he not perceive us?

Mos. No more than a blind harper.

He knows no man,

²⁷ The same.

²⁸ used for "brilliant" as well as "oriental."

No face of friend, nor name of any
servant,
Who 't was that fed him last, or gave
him drink:
Not those he hath begotten, or brought
up,
Can he remember.

CORV. Has he children?

Mos. Bastards,
Some dozen, or more, that he begot on
beggars,
Gypsies, and Jews, and black-moors,
when he was drunk.

Knew you not that, sir? 'tis the com-
mon fable,

The dwarf, the fool, the eunuch are all
his;

He's the true father of his family,
In all save me:—but he has giv'n 'em
nothing.

CORV. That's well, that's well! Art
sure he does not hear us?

Mos. Sure, sir! why, look you, credit
your own sense.

[*Shouts in VOLPONE's ear.*]

The pox approach, and add to your
diseases,

If it would send you hence the sooner,
sir,

For your incontinence, it hath deserv'd
it

Thoroughly and thoroughly, and the
plague to boot!—

You may come near, sir.—Would you
would once close

Those filthy eyes of yours, that flow
with slime

Like two frog-pits; and those same
hanging cheeks,

Cover'd with hide instead of skin—
Nay, help, sir²⁹—

That look like frozen dish-clouts set on
end!

CORV. Or like an old smok'd wall, on
which the rain

Ran down in streaks!

Mos. Excellent, sir! speak out:
You may be louder yet; a culverin
Discharg'd in his ear would hardly
bore it.

CORV. His nose is like a common
sewer, still running.

Mos. 'Tis good! And what his
mouth?

CORV. A very draught.

Mos. O, stop it up—

CORV. By no means.

Mos. Pray you, let me:

Faith I could stifle him rarely with a
pillow

As well as any woman that should keep
him.

CORV. Do as you will; but I'll be-
gone.

Mos. Be so;

It is your presence makes him last so
long.

CORV. I pray you use no violence.

Mos. No, sir! why?

Why should you be thus scrupulous,
pray you, sir?

CORV. Nay, at your discretion.

Mos. Well, good sir, be gone.

CORV. I will not trouble him now to
take³⁰ my pearl.

Mos. Puh! nor your diamond.

What a needless care

Is this afflicts you? Is not all here
yours?

Am not I here, whom you have made
your creature?

That owe my being to you?

CORV. Grateful Mosca!

Thou art my friend, my fellow, my
companion,

My partner, and shalt share in all my
fortunes.

Mos. Excepting one.

CORV. What's that?

Mos. Your gallant wife, sir.

[*Exit CORVINO.*]

Now is he gone: we had no other
means

To shoot him hence but this.

VOLF. My divine Mosca!

Thou hast to-day outgone thyself.
Who's there?

[*Another knocks.*]

I will be troubled with no more. Pre-
pare

Me music, dances, banquets, all de-
lights;

The Turk is not more sensual in his
pleasures

²⁹ to Corvino, to join in the abuse.

³⁰ take from Volpone's hand, which had
closed on it.

Than will Volpone. [*Exit MOSCA.*]
 Let me see; a pearl!
 A diamond! plate! chequins! Good
 morning's purchase.³¹
 Why, this is better than rob churches,
 yet;
 Or fat, by eating, once a month, a
 man——

[*Re-enter MOSCA.*]

Who is 't?
 Mos. The beauteous Lady Would-
 be, sir,
 Wife to the English knight, Sir Politic
 Would-be,
 (This is the style, sir, is directed me,)
 Hath sent to know how you have slept
 to-night,
 And if you would be visited?

Volp. Not now:
 Some three hours hence.

Mos. I told the squire³² so much.

Volp. When I am high with mirth
 and wine; then then:

'Fore heaven, I wonder at the desper-
 ate valour

Of the bold English, that they dare let
 loose

Their wives to all encounters!

Mos. Sir, this knight
 Had not his name for nothing, he is
politic,

And knows, how'er his wife affect
 strange airs,

She hath not yet the face to be dis-
 honest:

But had she Signior Corvino's wife's
 face——

Volp. Hath she so rare a face?

Mos. O, sir, the wonder,
 The blazing star of Italy! a wench
 Of the first year, a beauty ripe as
 harvest!

Whose skin is whiter than a swan all
 over,

Than silver, snow, or lilies; a soft
 lip,

Would tempt you to eternity of kiss-
 ing!

And flesh that melteth in the touch to
 blood!

Bright as your gold, and lovely as your
 gold!

³¹ booty. ³² messenger, go-between.

VOLP. Why had not I known this
 before?

Mos. Alas, sir,
 Myself but yesterday discover'd it.

Volp. How might I see her?
 Mos. O, not possible;
 She's kept as warily as is your gold;
 Never does come abroad, never takes
 air

But at a windore. All her looks are
 sweet,

As the first grapes or cherries, and are
 watch'd

As near as they are.

Volp. I must see her.

Mos. Sir,
 There is a guard of ten spies thick upon
 her,

All his whole household; each of which
 is set

Upon his fellow, and have all their
 charge,

When he goes out, when he comes in,
 examin'd.

Volp. I will go see her, though but
 at her windore.

Mos. In some disguise then.

Volp. That is true; I must
 Maintain mine own shape still the
 same; we'll think. [*Exeunt.*]

ACT II

SCENE I.³³

[*Enter SIR POLITIC WOULD-BE and
 PEREGRINE.*]

SIR. P. Sir, to a wise man, all the
 world's his soil:

It is not Italy, nor France, nor Europe,
 That must bound me, if my fates call
 me forth.

Yet I protest, it is no salt desire
 Of seeing countries, shifting a religion,
 Nor any disaffection to the state
 Where I was bred, and unto which I
 owe

My dearest plots, hath brought me out,
 much less

That idle, antique, stale, grey-headed
 project

³³ St. Mark's Place; a retired corner before
 Corvino's house.

Of knowing men's minds and manners,
with Ulysses!

But a peculiar humour of my wife's
Laid for this height of Venice, to observe,

To quote,³⁴ to learn the language, and
so forth—

I hope you travel, sir, with licence?

PER. Yes.

SIR P. I dare the safelier converse
—how long, sir,

Since you left England?

PER. Seven weeks.

SIR P. So lately!

You have not been with my lord ambassador?

PER. Not yet, sir.

SIR P. Pray you, what news, sir,
vents our climate?

I heard last night a most strange thing
reported

By some of my lord's followers, and I
long

To hear how 't will be seconded.

PER. What was 't, sir?

SIR P. Marry, sir, of a raven that
should build

In a ship royal of the king's.

PER. [*aside.*] This fellow,

Does he gull me, trow? or is gull'd?
Your name, sir?

SIR P. My name is Politic Would-be.

PER. [*aside.*] O, that speaks him.

A knight, sir?

SIR P. A poor knight, sir.

PER. Your lady

Lies³⁵ here in Venice, for intelligence
Of tires and fashions, and behaviour,
Among the courtesans? The fine Lady
Would-be?

SIR P. Yes, sir; the spider and the
bee ofttimes

Suck from one flower.

PER. Good Sir Politic,

I cry you mercy; I have heard much of
you:

'T is true, sir, of your raven.

SIR P. On your knowledge?

PER. Yes, and your lion's whelping
in the Tower.

SIR P. Another whelp!³⁶

³⁴ to make note of. ³⁵ stays.

³⁶ A lion is recorded by Stow to have been
born in the Tower of London, Aug. 5, 1604,
the first born in captivity in England.

PER. Another, sir.

SIR P. Now heaven!

What prodigies be these? The fires at
Berwick!

And the new star! These things con-
curring, strange,

And full of omen! Saw you those
meteors?

PER. I did, sir.

SIR P. Fearful! Pray you, sir, con-
firm me,

Were there three porpoises seen above
the bridge,

As they give out?

PER. Six, and a sturgeon, sir.

SIR P. I am astonish'd.

PER. Nay, sir, be not so;
I'll tell you a greater prodigy than
these.

SIR P. What should these things
portend?

PER. The very day

(Let me be sure) that I put forth from
London,

There was a whale discover'd in the
river,

As high as Woolwich, that had waited
there,

Few know how many months, for the
subversion

Of the Stode fleet.

SIR P. Is 't possible? Believe it,

'Twas either sent from Spain, or the
archduke's:

Spinola's whale, upon my life, my
credit!

Will they not leave these projects?
Worthy sir,

Some other news.

PER. Faith, Stone the fool is dead,
And they do lack a tavern fool ex-
tremely.

SIR P. Is Mass Stone dead?

PER. He's dead, sir; why, I hope
You thought him not immortal?—
[*aside.*] O, this knight,

Were he well known, would be a pre-
cious thing

To fit our English stage: he that should
write

But such a fellow, should be thought
to feign

Extremely, if not maliciously.

SIR P. Stone dead!

PER. Dead.—Lord! how deeply, sir, you apprehend it!
 He was no kinsman to you?
 SIR P. That I know of.
 Well! that same fellow was an unknown fool.
 PER. And yet you knew him, it seems?
 SIR P. I did so. Sir,
 I knew him one of the most dangerous heads
 Living within the state, and so I held him.
 PER. Indeed, sir?
 SIR P. While he liv'd, in action,
 He has receiv'd weekly intelligence,
 Upon my knowledge, out of the Low Countries,
 For all parts of the world, in cabbages;
 And those dispens'd again to ambassadors,
 In oranges, musk-melons, apricots,
 Lemons, pome-citrons, and such-like;
 sometimes
 In Colchester oysters, and your Selsey cockles.
 PER. You make me wonder.
 SIR P. Sir, upon my knowledge.
 Nay, I've observ'd him, at your public ordinary,
 Take his advertisement³⁷ from a traveller,
 A conceal'd statesman, in a trencher of meat;
 And instantly, before the meal was done,
 Convey an answer in a tooth-pick.
 PER. Strange!
 How could this be, sir?
 SIR P. Why, the meat was cut
 So like his character, and so laid as he
 Must easily read the cipher.
 PER. I have heard,
 He could not read, sir.
 SIR P. So 'twas given out,
 In policy, by those that did employ him:
 But he could read, and had your languages,
 And to 't, as sound a noddle——
 PER. I have heard, sir,
 That your baboons were spies, and that they were

³⁷ information.

A kind of subtle nation near to China.
 SIR P. Ay, ay, your Mamaluchi.
 Faith, they had
 Their hand in a French plot or two;
 but they
 Were so extremely giv'n to women, as
 They made discovery of all: yet I
 Had my advices here, on Wednesday last,
 From one of their own coat, they were return'd,
 Made their relations, as the fashion is,
 And now stand fair for fresh employment.
 PER. [*aside.*] Heart!
 This Sir Pol will be ignorant of nothing.—
 It seems sir, you know all.
 SIR P. Not all, sir; but
 I have some general notions. I do love
 To note and to observe: though I live out,
 Free from the active torrent, yet I'd mark
 The currents and the passages of things
 For mine own private use; and know the ebbs
 And flows of state.
 PER. Believe it, sir, I hold
 Myself in no small tie³⁸ unto my fortunes,
 For casting me thus luckily upon you,
 Whose knowledge, if your bounty equal it,
 May do me great assistance, in instruction
 For my behaviour, and my bearing, which
 Is yet so rude and raw.
 SIR P. Why? came you forth
 Empty of rules for travel?
 PER. Faith, I had
 Some common ones, from out that vulgar grammar,
 Which he that cri'd Italian to me, taught me.
 SIR P. Why, this it is that spoils
 all our brave bloods,
 Trusting our hopeful gentry unto pedants,
 Fellows of outside, and mere bark.
 You seem

³⁸ obligation.

To be a gentleman of ingenuous
race:—

I not profess it, but my fate hath been
To be, where I have been consulted
with,

In this high kind, touching some great
men's sons,

Persons of blood and honour.—

PER. Who be these, sir?

SCENE II.

[*To them enter MOSCA and NANO
disguised, followed by persons
with materials for erecting a
stage.*]

MOS. Under that window, there 't
must be. The same.

SIR P. Fellows, to mount a bank.
Did your instructor

In the dear tongues, never discourse to
you

Of the Italian mountebanks?

PER. Yes, sir,

SIR P. Why,

Here shall you see one.

PER. They are quacksalvers,
Fellows that live by venting oils and
drugs.

SIR P. Was that the character he
gave you of them?

PER. As I remember.

SIR P. Pity his ignorance.

They are the only knowing men of
Europe!

Great general scholars, excellent physi-
cians,

Most admir'd statesmen, profest
favourites

And cabinet counsellors to the greatest
princes;

The only languag'd men of all the
world!

PER. And, I have heard, they are
most lewd³⁹ impostors;

Made all of terms and shreds; no less
beliers

Of great men's favours, than their own
vile medicines;

Which they will utter upon monstrous
oaths;

³⁹ ignorant.

Selling that drug for twopence, ere they
part,

Which they have valu'd at twelve
crowns before.

SIR P. Sir, calumnies are answer'd
best with silence.

Yoursell shall judge.—Who is it
mounts, my friends?

MOS. Scoto of Mantua,⁴⁰ sir.

SIR P. Is't he? Nay, then
I'll proudly promise, sir, you shall be-
hold

Another man than has been phant'-
sied⁴¹ to you.

I wonder yet, that he should mount his
bank,

Here in this nook, that has been wont
t' appear

In face of the Piazza!—Here he comes.

[*Enter VOLPONE, disguised as a
mountebank Doctor, and fol-
lowed by a crowd of people.*]

VOLP. Mount, zany. [*To NANO.*]

MOS. Follow, follow, follow, follow!

SIR P. See how the people follow
him! he's a man

May write ten thousand crowns in bank
here. Note,

[*VOLPONE mounts the stage.*]

Mark but his gesture:—I do use to
observe

The state he keeps in getting up.

PER. 'Tis worth it, sir.

VOLP. "Most noble gentlemen, and
my worthy patrons! It may seem
strange that I, your Scoto Mantuano,
who was ever wont to fix my bank in
the face of the public Piazza, near the
shelter of the Portico to the Procuratia,
should now, after eight months' absence
from this illustrious city of Venice,
humbly retire myself into an obscure
nook of the Piazza."

SIR P. Did not I now object the
same?

PER. Peace, sir.

VOLP. "Let me tell you: I am not,
as your Lombard proverb saith, cold
on my feet; or content to part with my
commodities at a cheaper rate than I

³⁹ The name of an Italian juggler who was
in England about this time. (Gifford.)

⁴¹ misrepresented.

am accustom'd: look not for it. Nor that the calumnious reports of that impudent detractor, and shame to our profession (Alessandro Buttone, I mean), who gave out, in public, I was condemn'd a' *sforzato*⁴² to the galleys, for poisoning the Cardinal Bembo's—cook, hath at all attach'd, much less dejected me. No, no, worthy gentlemen; to tell you true, I cannot endure to see the rabble of these ground *ciarlitani*,⁴³ that spread their cloaks on the pavement, as if they meant to do feats of activity, and then come in lamely, with their mouldy tales out of Boccacio, like stale Tabarin;⁴⁴ the fabulist: some of them discoursing their travels, and of their tedious captivity in the Turk's galleys, when, indeed, were the truth known, they were the Christian's galleys, where very temperately they eat bread, and drunk water, as a wholesome penance, enjoin'd them by their confessors, for base pilferies."

SIR P. Note but his bearing, and contempt of these.

VOLP. "These . . . with one poor groat's-worth of unprepar'd antimony, finely wrapt up in several *scartoccios*,⁴⁵ are able, very well, to kill their twenty a week, and play; yet these meagre, starv'd spirits, who have stopt the organs of their minds with earthy opilations,⁴⁶ want not their favourers among your shrivell'd salad-eating artisans, who are overjoy'd that they may have their half-pe'rth of physic; though it purge 'em into another world, 't makes no matter."

SIR P. Excellent! ha? you heard better language, sir?

VOLP. "Well, let 'em go. And, gentlemen, honourable gentlemen, know, that for this time, our bank, being thus removed from the clamours of the *canaglia*⁴⁷ shall be the scene of pleasure and delight; for I have nothing to sell, little or nothing to sell."

SIR P. I told you, sir, his end.

⁴² Ital. "With hard labor."

⁴³ petty charlatans, impostors.

⁴⁴ a French charlatan of the early seventeenth century, whose jests were published.

⁴⁵ fold of paper.

⁴⁶ obstructions.

⁴⁷ rabble.

PER.

You did so, sir.

VOLP. "I protest, I, and my six servants, are not able to make of this precious liquor so fast as it is fetch'd away from my lodging by gentlemen of your city; strangers of the Terra-firma;⁴⁸ worshipful merchants; ay, and senators too: who, ever since my arrival, have detain'd me to their uses, by their splendidous liberalities. And worthily; for, what avails your rich man to have his magazines stuff'd with *moscadelli*, or of the purest grape, when his physicians prescribe him, on pain of death, to drink nothing but water cocted⁴⁹ with aniseeds? O health! health! the blessing of the rich! the riches of the poor! who can buy thee at too dear a rate, since there is no enjoying this world without thee? Be not then so sparing of your purses, honourable gentlemen, as to abridge the natural course of life——"

PER. You see his end.

SIR P.

Ay, is't not good?

VOLP. "For when a humid flux, or catarrh, by the mutability of air, falls from your head into an arm or shoulder, or any other part; take you a ducket, or your chequin of gold, and apply to the place affected: see what good effect it can work. No, no, 't is this blessed *unguento*,⁵⁰ this rare extraction, that hath only power to disperse all malignant humours, that proceed either of hot, cold, moist, or windy causes——"

PER. I would he had put in dry too.

SIR P.

Pray you observe.

VOLP. "To fortify the most indigest and crude stomach, ay, were it of one that, through extreme weakness, vomited blood, applying only a warm napkin to the place, after the unction and fricace;⁵¹—for the *vertigine*⁵² in the head, putting but a drop into your nostrils, likewise behind the ears; a most sovereign and approv'd remedy; the *mal caduco*,⁵³ cramps, convulsions, paralyses, epilepsies, *tremor cordia*, re-

⁴⁸ Continental possessions of Venice. (Gifford.)

⁴⁹ boiled.

⁵⁰ ointment.

⁵¹ an oil to be rubbed in.

⁵² giddiness.

⁵³ epilepsy.

tir'd nerves, ill vapours of the spleen, stoppings of the liver, the stone, the strangury, *hernia ventosa*, *iliaca passio*; ⁵⁴ stops a *dysenteria* immediately; easeth the torsion ⁵⁵ of the small guts; and cures *melancholia hypocondriaca*, being taken and appli'd, according to my printed receipt. [*pointing to his bill and his glass.*] For this is the physician, this the medicine; this counsels, this cures; this gives the direction, this works the effect; and, in sum, both together may be term'd an abstract of the theoric and practice in the Aesculapian art. 'Twill cost you eight crowns. And,—Zan Fritada, prithee sing a verse extempore in honour of it."

SIR P. How do you like him, sir?

PER. Most strangely, I!

SIR P. Is not his language rare?

PER. But alchemy, I never heard the like, or Broughton's ⁵⁶ books.

[NANO sings.]

Had old Hippocrates, or Galen,
That to their books put med'cines all in,
But known this secret, they had never
(Of which they will be guilty ever)
Been murderers of so much paper,
Or wasted many a hurtless taper;
No Indian drug had e'er been fam'd,
Tobacco, sassafras not nam'd;
Ne yet of guacum one small stick, sir,
Nor Raymund Lully's ⁵⁷ great elixir.
Ne have been known the Danish Gonswart ⁵⁸
Or Paracelsus, with his long sword. ⁵⁹

PER. All this, yet, will not do; eight crowns is high.

VOLP. "No more.—Gentlemen, if I had but time to discourse to you the miraculous effects of this my oil, surnam'd Oglío del Scoto; with the countless catalogue of those I have cur'd of th' aforesaid, and many more diseases; the patents and privileges of all the princes and commonwealths of Chris-

⁵⁴ colic.

⁵⁵ gripes.

⁵⁶ An eccentric theologian of the time. See *The Alchemist*.

⁵⁷ the well-known alchemist of the fourteenth century.

⁵⁸ unknown.

⁵⁹ in the hilt of which he carried his familiar.

tendom; or but the depositions of those that appear'd on my part, before the signiory of the Sanita and most learned College of Physicians; where I was authoris'd, upon notice taken of the admirable virtues of my medicaments, and mine own excellency in matter of rare and unknown secrets, not only to disperse them publicly in this famous city, but in all the territories, that happily joy under the government of the most pious and magnificent states of Italy. But may some other gallant fellow say, 'O, there be divers that make profession to have as good, and as experimented receipts as yours': indeed, very many have assay'd, like apes, in imitation of that, which is really and essentially in me, to make of this oil; bestow'd great cost in furnaces, stills, alembics, continual fires, and preparation of the ingredients (as indeed there goes to it six hundred several simples, besides some quantity of human fat, for the conglutination, which we buy of the anatomists), but when these practitioners come to the last decoction, blow, blow, puff, puff, and all flies *in fumo*: ⁶⁰ ha, ha, ha! Poor wretches! I rather pity their folly and indiscretion, than their loss of time and money; for those may be recover'd by industry: but to be a fool born, is a disease incurable.

"For myself, I always from my youth have endeavour'd to get the rarest secrets, and book them, either in exchange, or for money; I spar'd nor cost nor labour, where anything was worthy to be learned. And, gentlemen, honourable gentlemen, I will undertake, by virtue of chymical art, out of the honourable hat that covers your head, to extract the four elements; that is to say, the fire, air, water, and earth, and return you your felt without burn or stain. For, whilst others have been at the *ballo*, ⁶¹ I have been at my book; and am now past the craggy paths of study, and come to the flowery plains of honour and reputation."

SIR P. I do assure you, sir, that is his aim.

⁶⁰ in smoke.

⁶¹ ball; dancing.

VOLP. "But to our price——"

PER. And that withal, Sir Pol.

VOLP. "You all know, honourable gentlemen, I never valu'd this *ampulla*, or vial, at less than eight crowns; but for this time, I am content to be depriv'd of it for six; six crowns is the price, and less in courtesy I know you cannot offer me; take it or leave it, howsoever, both it and I am at your service. I ask you not as the value of the thing, for then I should demand of you a thousand crowns, so the Cardinals Montalto, Fernese, the great Duke of Tuscany, my gossip,⁶² with divers other princes, have given me; but I despise money. Only to show my affection to you, honourable gentlemen, and your illustrious State here, I have neglected the messages of these princes, mine own offices, fram'd my journey hither, only to present you with the fruits of my travels.—Tune your voices once more to the touch of your instruments, and give the honourable assembly some delightful recreation."

PER. What monstrous and most painful circumstance
Is here, to get some three or four gazettes,⁶³
Some threepence i' the whole! for that 'twill come to.

[NANO sings.]

You that would last long, list to my song,
Make no more coil, but buy of this oil.
Would you be ever fair and young?
Stout of teeth, and strong of tongue?
Tart of palate? quick of ear?
Sharp of sight? of nostril clear?
Moist of hand? and light of foot?
Or, I will come nearer to 't,
Would you live free from all diseases?
Do the act your mistress pleases,
Yet fright all aches⁶⁴ from your bones?
Here's a med'cine for the nones.⁶⁵

VOLP. "Well, I am in a humour at this time to make a present of the small quantity my coffer contains; to the rich in courtesy, and to the poor for God's

sake. Wherefore now mark: I ask'd you six crowns; and six crowns, at other times, you have paid me; you shall not give me six crowns, nor five, nor four, nor three, nor two, nor one; nor half a ducat; no, nor a *moccinigo*.⁶⁶ Sixpence it will cost you, or six hundred pound—expect no lower price, for, by the banner of my front, I will not bate a bagatine,⁶⁷—that I will have, only, a pledge of your loves, to carry something from amongst you, to show I am not condemn'd by you. Therefore, now, toss your handkerchiefs, cheerfully, cheerfully; and be advertis'd, that the first heroic spirit that deigns to grace me with a handkerchief, I will give it a little remembrance of something beside, shall please it better than if I had presented it with a double pistolet."⁶⁸

PER. Will you be that heroic spark,
Sir Pol?

[CELIA, at the window, throws down her handkerchief.]

O, see! the windore has prevented⁶⁹ you.

VOLP. "Lady, I kiss your bounty; and for this timely grace you have done your poor Scoto of Mantua, I will return you, over and above my oil, a secret of that high and inestimable nature, shall make you for ever enamour'd on that minute, wherein your eye first descended on so mean, yet not altogether to be despis'd, an object. Here is a powder conceal'd in this paper, of which, if I should speak to the worth, nine thousand volumes were but as one page, that page as a line, that line as a word; so short is this pilgrimage of man (which some call life) to the expressing of it. Would I reflect on the price? Why, the whole world is but as an empire, that empire as a province, that province as a bank, that bank as a private purse to the purchase of it. I will only tell you; it is the powder that made Venus a goddess (given her by Apollo), that kept

⁶² a coin used in Venice, worth about ninepence.

⁶³ an Italian coin worth about one third of a farthing.

⁶⁴ a Spanish coin.

⁶⁵ anticipated.

⁶² lit. god-parent; usually, familiar friend.

⁶³ A small Venetian coin, worth about three farthings. The name was transferred to the news-sheets bought for it.

⁶⁴ pronounced *aitches*.

⁶⁵ for the purpose.

her perpetually young, clear'd her wrinkles, firm'd her gums, fill'd her skin, colour'd her hair; from her deriv'd to Helen, and at the sack of Troy unfortunately lost: till now, in this our age, it was as happily recover'd, by a studious antiquary, out of some ruins of Asia, who sent a moiety of it to the court of France (but much sophisticated), wherewith the ladies there now colour their hair. The rest, at this present, remains with me; extracted to a quintessence: so that, wherever it but touches, in youth it perpetually preserves, in age restores the complexion; seats your teeth, did they dance like virginal jacks,⁷⁰ firm as a wall: makes them white as ivory, that were black as——"

SCENE III.⁷¹

[*To them enter CORVINO.*]

COR. Spite o' the devil, and my shame! come down here;
Come down!—No house but mine to make your scene?
Signior Flaminio, will you down, sir? down?

What, is my wife your Franciscina, sir?
No windows on the whole Piazza, here,
To make your properties, but mine? but mine?

[*Beats away VOLPONE, NANO, etc.*]
Heart! ere to-morrow I shall be new christen'd,
And called the Pantalone di Besogniosi,⁷²
About the town.

PER. What should this mean, Sir Pol?

SIR P. Some trick of state, believe it; I will home.

PER. It may be some design on you.

SIR P. I know not.
I'll stand upon my guard.

PER. It is your best, sir,

SIR P. This three weeks, all my advices, all my letters,

⁷⁰ small pieces of wood to which were attached the quills which struck the strings of the virginal.

⁷¹ The same.

⁷² Ital. "Fool of the Beggars."

They have been intercepted.

PER. Indeed, sir!

Best have a care.

SIR P. Nay, so I will.

PER. This knight,
I may not lose him, for my mirth, till night. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE IV.⁷³

[*Enter VOLPONE, MOSCA.*]

VOLP. O, I am wounded!

MOS. Where, sir?

VOLP. Not without;

Those blows were nothing: I could bear them ever.

But angry Cupid, bolting from her eyes,
Hath shot himself into me like a flame;
Where now he flings about his burning heat,

As in a furnace an ambitious fire .
Whose vent is stopt. The fight is all within me.

I cannot live, except thou help me Mosca;

My liver melts, and I, without the hope
Of some soft air from her refreshing breath,

Am but a heap of cinders.

MOS. 'Las, good sir,

Would you had never seen her!

VOLP. Nay, would thou
Hadst never told me of her!

MOS. Sir, 'tis true;
I do confess I was unfortunate,
And you unhappy; but I'm bound in conscience,

No less than duty, to effect my best
To your release of torment, and I will, sir,

VOLP. Dear Mosca, shall I hope?

MOS. Sir, more than dear,
I will not bid you to despair of aught
Within a human compass.

VOLP. O, there spoke
My better angel. Mosca, take my keys,
Gold, plate, and jewels, all's at thy devotion;

Employ them how thou wilt: nay, coin me too:

So thou in this but crown my longings,
Mosca.

⁷³ A room in Volpone's house.

Mos. Use but your patience.

VOLP. So I have.

Mos. I doubt not

To bring success to your desires.

VOLP. Nay, then,

I not repent me of my late disguise.

Mos. If you can horn him, sir, you need not.

VOLP. True:

Besides, I never meant him for my heir.

Is not the colour o' my beard and eyebrows

To make me known?

Mos. No jot.

VOLP. I did it well.

Mos. So well, would I could follow you in mine,

With half the happiness! and yet I would

Escape your epilogue.⁷⁴

VOLP. But were they gull'd

With a belief that I was Scoto?

Mos. Sir,

Scoto himself could hardly have distinguishing'd!

I have not time to flatter you now; we'll part:

And as I prosper, so applaud my art.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE V.⁷⁵

[*Enter CORVINO, with his sword in his hand, dragging in CELIA.*]

CORV. Death of mine honour, with the city's fool!

A juggling, tooth-drawing, prating mountebank!

And at a public windore! where, whilst he,

With his strain'd action, and his dole of faces,⁷⁶

To his drug-lecture draws your itching ears,

A crew of old, unmarri'd, noted lechers, Stood leering up like satyrs: and you smile

Most graciously, and fan your favours forth,

To give your hot spectators satisfaction!

⁷⁴ *I. e.* the beating from Corvino.

⁷⁵ A room in Corvino's house.

⁷⁶ grimaces.

What, was your mountbank their call? their whistle?

Or were you enamour'd on his copper rings,

His saffron jewel, with the toad-stone in 't,

Or his embroid'red suit, with the cope-stitch,

Made of a hearse cloth? or his old tilt-feather?

Or his starch'd beard! Well, you shall have him, yes!

He shall come home, and minister unto you

The fricace for the mother.⁷⁷ Or, let me see,

I think you'd rather mount; would you not mount?

Why, if you'll mount, you may; yes, truly, you may!

And so you may be seen, down to the foot.

Get you a cittern, Lady Vanity, And be a dealer with the virtuous man;

Make one. I'll but protest myself a cuckold,

And save your dowry. I'm a Dutchman, I!

For if you thought me an Italian, You would be damn'd ere you did this,

you whore!

Thou'dst tremble to imagine that the murder

Of father, mother, brother, all thy race, Should follow, as the subject of my justice.

CEL. Good sir, have patience.

CORV. What couldst thou propose⁷⁸ Less to thyself, than in this heat of

wrath,

And stung with my dishonour, I should strike

This steel into thee, with as many stabs As thou wert gaz'd upon with goatish

eyes?

CEL. Alas, sir, be appeas'd! I could not think

My being at the windore should more now

Move your impatience than at other times.

CORV. No! not to seek and entertain a parley

⁷⁷ hysteria.

⁷⁸ expect.

With a known knave, before a multi-
tude!
You were an actor with your handker-
chief,
Which he most sweetly kist in the
receipt,
And might, no doubt, return it with a
letter,
And point the place where you might
meet; your sister's,
Your mother's, or your aunt's might
serve the turn.

CEL. Why, dear sir, when do I make
these excuses,
Or ever stir abroad, but to the church?
And that so seldom—

CORV. Well, it shall be less;
And thy restraint before was liberty,
To what I now decree; and therefore
mark me.

First, I will have this bawdy light
damm'd up;

And till 't be done, some two or three
yards off,

I'll chalk a line; o'er which if thou but
chance

To set thy desp'rate foot, more hell,
more horror,

More wild remorseless rage shall seize
on thee,

Than on a conjuror that had heedless
left

His circle's safety ere his devil was
laid.

Then here's a lock which I will hang
upon thee,

And, now I think on't, I will keep thee
backwards;

Thy lodging shall be backwards: thy
walks backwards;

Thy prospect, all be backwards; and
no pleasure,

That thou shalt know but backwards:
nay, since you force

My honest nature, know, it is your
own,

Being too open, makes me use you thus:
Since you will not contain your subtle
nostrils

In a sweet room, but they must snuff
the air

Of rank and sweaty passengers.

[*Knock within.*]

One knocks.

Away, and be not seen, pain of thy
life;

Nor look toward the windore; if thou
dost—

Nay, stay, hear this—let me not pros-
per, whore,

But I will make thee an anatomy,
Dissect thee mine own self, and read
a lecture

Upon thee to the city, and in public.
Away!— [Exit CELIA.]

[Enter SERVANT.]

Who's there?

SER. 'Tis Signior Mosca, sir.

SCENE VI.⁷⁹

[CORVINO. Enter MOSCA.]

CORV. Let him come in. His mas-
ter's dead; there's yet
Some good to help the bad.—My
Mosca, welcome!

I guess your news.

MOS. I fear you cannot, sir.

CORV. Is 't not his death?

MOS. Rather the contrary.

CORV. Not his recovery?

MOS. Yes, sir.

CORV. I am curs'd,

I am bewitch'd, my crosses meet to vex
me.

How? how? how?

MOS. Why, sir, with Scoto's oil;
Corbaccio and Voltore brought of it,
Whilst I was busy in an inner room—

CORV. Death! that damn'd mounte-
bank! but for the law

Now, I could kill the rascal: it cannot
be

His oil should have that virtue. Ha'
not I

Known him a common rogue, come fid-
dling in

To the osteria,⁸⁰ with a tumbling whore,
And, when he has done all his forc'd
tricks, been glad

Of a poor spoonful of dead wine, with
flies in't?

It cannot be. All his ingredients
Are a sheep's gall, a roasted bitch's
marrow,

⁷⁹ The same.

⁸⁰ the inn.

Some few sod⁸¹ earwigs, pounded caterpillars,
A little capon's grease, and fasting spittle:
I know them to a dram.

Mos. I know not, sir;
But some on't, there, they pour'd into his ears,
Some in his nostrils, and recover'd him;
Applying but the fricace.

CORV. Pox o' that fricace!
Mos. And since, to seem the more officious
And flatt'ring of his health, there, they have had,
At extreme fees, the college of physicians

Consulting on him, how they might restore him;

Where one would have a cataplasm⁸² of spices,

Another a flay'd ape clapp'd to his breast,

A third would have it a dog, a fourth an oil,

With wild cats' skins: at last, they all resolv'd

That to preserve him, was no other means

But some young woman must be straight sought out,

Lusty, and full of juice, to sleep by him;

And to this service most unhappily, And most unwillingly, am I now employ'd,

Which here I thought to pre-acquaint you with,

For your advice, since it concerns you most;

Because I would not do that thing might cross

Your ends, on whom I have my whole dependence, sir;

Yet, if I do it not they may delate⁸³

My slackness to my patron, work me out

Of his opinion; and there all your hopes,

Ventures, or whatsoever, are all frustrated!

I do but tell you, sir. Besides, they are all

Now striving who shall first present him; therefore—

I could entreat you, briefly conclude somewhat;

Prevent 'em if you can.

CORV. Death to my hopes,
This is my villanous fortune! Best to hire

Some common courtesan.

Mos. Ay, I thought on that, sir;
But they are all so subtle, full of art—
And age again doting and flexible,
So as—I cannot tell—we may, perchance,

Light on a quean may cheat us all.

CORV. 'Tis true.

Mos. No, no: it must be one that has no tricks, sir,

Some simple thing, a creature made⁸⁴ unto it;

Some wench you may command. Ha' you no kinswoman?

Gods so—Think, think, think, think, think, think, think, sir.

One o' the doctors offer'd there his daughter.

CORV. How!

Mos. Yes, Signior Lupo, the physician.

CORV. His daughter!

Mos. And a virgin, sir. Why, alas, He knows the state of 's body, what it is:

That nought can warm his blood, sir, but a fever;

Nor any incantation raise his spirit:

A long forgetfulness hath seiz'd that part.

Besides, sir, who shall know it? Some one or two—

CORV. I pray thee give me leave. [*walks aside.*] If any man

But I had had this luck—The thing in 't self,

I know, is nothing.—Wherefore should not I

As well command my blood and my affections

As this duii doctor? In the point of honour,

The cases are all one of wife and daughter.

Mos. [*aside.*] I hear him coming.⁸⁵

⁸⁴ prepared. ⁸⁵ coming into my trap.

⁸¹ boiled. ⁸² poultice. ⁸³ accuse.

CORV. She shall do 't: 't is done.
'Slight! if this doctor, who is not en-
gag'd,

Unless 't be for his counsel, which is
nothing,

Offer his daughter, what should I, that
am

So deeply in? I will prevent him:
wretch!

Covetous wretch!—Mosca, I have de-
termin'd.

Mos. How, sir?

CORV. We'll make all sure. The
party you wot of

Shall be mine own wife, Mosca.

Mos. Sir, the thing,
But that I would not seem to counsel
you,

I should have motion'd ⁸⁶ to you, at the
first:

And make your count, ⁸⁷ you have cut
all their throats. ⁸⁸

Why, 't is directly taking a possession!
And in his next fit, we may let him go.

'Tis but to pull the pillow from his
head,

And he is throttled: it had been done
before

But for your scrupulous doubts.

CORV. Ay, a plague on 't,
My conscience fools my wit! Well,
I'll be brief:

And so be thou, lest they should be
before us.

Go home, prepare him, tell him with
what zeal

And willingness I do it: swear it was
On the first hearing, as thou mayst do,

truly,

Mine own free motion.

Mos. Sir, I warrant you,
I'll so possess him with it, that the rest
Of his starv'd clients shall be banish'd
all;

And only you receiv'd. But come not,
sir,

Until I send, for I have something else
To ripen for your good, you must not
know 't.

CORV. But do not you forget to send
now.

Mos. Fear not. [Exit.]

⁸⁶ proposed.

⁸⁸ outdone them all.

⁸⁷ reckon on it.

SCENE VII.⁸⁹

[CORVINO.]

CORV. Where are you, wife? My
Celia! wife!

[Enter CELIA.]

—What, blubb'ring?

Come, dry those tears. I think thou
thought'st me in earnest;

Ha! by this light I talk'd so but to try
thee:

Methinks, the lightness of the occasion
Should have confirm'd thee. Come, I
am not jealous.

CEL. No?

CORV. Faith I am not, I, nor never
was;

It is a poor unprofitable humour.

Do not I know, if women have a will,
They'll do 'gainst all the watches o' the
world,

And that the fiercest spies are tam'd
with gold?

Tut, I am confident in thee, thou shalt
see't;

And see I'll give thee cause too, to be-
lieve it.

Come kiss me. Go, and make thee
ready straight,

In all thy best attire, thy choicest
jewels,

Put 'em all on, and, with 'em, thy best
looks:

We are invited to a solemn feast,
At old Volpone's, where it shall appear

How far I am free from jealousy or
fear. [Exeunt.]

ACT III

SCENE I.⁹⁰

[Enter MOSCA.]

Mos. I fear I shall begin to grow in
love

With my dear self, and my most pros-
p'rous parts,

They do so spring and burgeon; I can
feel

A whimsey i' my blood: I know not
how,

⁸⁹ The same.

⁹⁰ A street.

Success hath made me wanton. I could
 skip
 Out of my skin now, like a subtle
 snake,
 I am so limber. O! your parasite
 Is a most precious thing, dropt from
 above,
 Not bred 'mongst clods and clodpoles,
 here on earth.
 I muse, the mystery ⁹¹ was not made a
 science,
 It is so liberally profest! Almost
 All the wise world is little else, in
 nature,
 But parasites or sub-parasites. And
 yet
 I mean not those that have your bare
 town-art,
 To know who's fit to feed them; have
 no house,
 No family, no care, and therefore mould
 Tales for men's ears, to bait that sense;
 or get
 Kitchen-invention, and some stale re-
 ceipts
 To please the belly, and the groin; nor
 those,
 With their court dog-tricks, that can
 fawn and fleer,
 Make their revenue out of legs ⁹² and
 faces,
 Echo my lord, and lick away a moth:
 But your fine elegant rascal, that can
 rise
 And stoop, almost together, like an
 arrow;
 Shoot through the air as nimbly as a
 star;
 Turn short as doth a swallow; and be
 here,
 And there, and here, and yonder, all
 at once;
 Present to any humour, all occasion;
 And change a visor swifter than a
 thought!
 This is the creature had the art born
 with him;
 Toils not to learn it, but doth practise
 it
 Out of most excellent nature: and such
 sparks
 Are the true parasites, others but their
 zanies.

⁹¹ profession. ⁹² bows.

SCENE II.⁹³

[Mosca. Enter BONARIO.]

Who's this? Bonario, old Corbaccio's
 son?

The person I was bound to see. Fair
 sir,

You are happ'ly met.

BON. That cannot be by thee.

Mos. Why, sir?

BON. Nay, pray thee know thy way,
 and leave me:

I would be loth to interchange discourse
 With such a mate ⁹⁴ as thou art.

Mos. Courteous sir,
 Scorn not my poverty.

BON. Not I, by heaven;
 But thou shalt give me leave to hate
 thy baseness.

Mos. Baseness!

BON. Ay, answer me, is not thy sloth
 Sufficient argument? thy flattery?

Thy means of feeding?

Mos. Heaven be good to me!
 These imputations are too common, sir,
 And easily stuck on virtue when she's
 poor.

You are unequal ⁹⁵ to me, and however
 Your sentence may be righteous, yet
 you are not,

That, ere you know me, thus proceed
 in censure:

St. Mark bear witness 'gainst you, 't is
 inhuman. [Weeps:]

BON. [aside.] What! does he weep?
 the sign is soft and good:

I do repent me that I was so harsh.

Mos. 'Tis true, that, sway'd by
 strong necessity,

I am enforc'd to eat my careful bread
 With too much obsequy; 'tis true, be-
 side,

That I am fain to spin mine own poor
 raiment

Out of my mere observance, being not
 born

To a free fortune; but that I have done
 Base offices, in rending friends asunder,
 Dividing families, betraying counsels,
 Whisp'ring false lies, or mining men
 with praises,

Train'd their credulity with perjuries,
 Corrupted chastity, or am in love

⁹³ The same. ⁹⁴ fellow. ⁹⁵ unfair.

With mine own tender ease, but would
not rather
Prove the most rugged and laborious
course,
That might redeem my present estima-
tion,
Let me here perish, in all hope of
goodness.

BON. [*aside.*] This cannot be a per-
sonated passion.—

I was to blame, so to mistake thy
nature;

Prithee forgive me: and speak out thy
business.

Mos. Sir, it concerns you; and
though I may seem

At first to make a main offence in
manners,

And in my gratitude unto my master,
Yet for the pure love which I bear all
right,

And hatred of the wrong, I must reveal
it.

This very hour your father is in purpose
To disinherit you——

BON. How!

Mos. And thrust you forth,
As a mere stranger to his blood: 'tis
true, sir.

The work no way engageth me, but as
I claim an interest in the general state
Of goodness and true virtue, which I
hear

T' abound in you; and for which mere
respect,

Without a second aim, sir, I have done
it.

BON. This tale hath lost thee much
of the late trust

Thou hadst with me; it is impossible.
I know not how to lend it any thought,
My father should be so unnatural.

Mos. It is a confidence that well be-
comes

Your piety; and form'd, no doubt, it is
From your own simple innocence:
which makes

Your wrong more monstrous and ab-
horr'd. But, sir,

I now will tell you more. This very
minute,

It is, or will be doing; and if you
Shall be but pleas'd to go with me, I'll
bring you,

I dare not say where you shall see, but
where

Your ear shall be a witness of the deed;
Hear yourself written bastard, and pro-
fess

The common issue of the earth.

BON. I'm maz'd!

Mos. Sir, if I do it not, draw your
just sword,

And score your vengeance on my front
and face;

Mark me your villain: you have too
much wrong,

And I do suffer for you, sir. My heart
Weeps blood in anguish——

BON. Lead; I follow thee.
[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.*

[*Enter VOLPONE, NANO, ANDRO-
GYNO, CASTRONE.*]

VOLP. Mosca stays long, methinks.

—Bring forth your sports,
And help to make the wretched time
more sweet.

NAN. "Dwarf, fool, and eunuch, well
met here we be.

A question it were now, whether of us
three,

Being all the known delicacies of a rich
man,

In pleasing him, claim the precedence
can?"

CAS. "I claim for myself."

AND. "And so doth the fool."

NAN. "'Tis foolish indeed: let me
set you both to school.

First for your dwarf, he's little and
witty,

And everything, as it is little, is pretty;
Else why do men say to a creature of
my shape,

So soon as they see him, 'It's a pretty
little ape'?

And why a pretty ape, but for pleasing
imitation

Of greater men's actions, in a ridiculous
fashion?

Beside, this feat⁹⁷ body of mine doth
not crave

* A room in Volpone's house.

⁹⁷ neatly made.

Half the meat, drink, and cloth, one of
your bulks will have.

Admit your fool's face be the mother of
laughter,

Yet, for his brain, it must always come
after:

And though that do feed him, it's a
pitiful case,

His body is beholding to such a bad
face." [One knocks.]

VOLP. Who's there? My couch;
away! look! Nano, see:

[Exeunt ANDROGYNO
and CASTRONE.]

Give me my caps first—go, inquire.

[Exit NANO.]

Now, Cupid

Send it be Mosca, and with fair return!

NAN. [within.] It is the beauteous
madam—

VOLP. Would-be—is it?

NAN. The same.

VOLP. Now torment on me! Squire
her in;
For she will enter, or dwell here for
ever:

Nay, quickly. [retires to his couch.]

That my fit were past! I fear
A second hell too, that my loathing this
Will quite expel my appetite to the
other:

Would she were taking now her tedious
leave.

Lord, how it threatens me what I am to
suffer!

SCENE IV.⁹⁹

[To him enter NANO, LADY POLITIC
WOULD-BE.]

LADY P. I thank you, good sir. Pray
you signify

Unto your patron I am here.—This
band

Shows not my neck enough.—I trouble
you, sir;

Let me request you bid one of my
women

Come hither to me. In good faith, I
am drest

Most favourably to-day! It is no mat-
ter:

'Tis well enough.

⁹⁹ The same.

[Enter 1 WAITING-WOMAN.]

Look, see these petulant things,
How they have done this!

VOLP. [aside.] I do feel the fever
Ent'ring in at mine ears; O, for a
charm,

To fright it hence!

LADY P. Come nearer: is this curl
In his right place, or this? Why is this
higher

Than all the rest? You ha' not wash'd
your eyes yet!

Or do they not stand even i' your head?
Where is your fellow? call her.

[Exit 1 WOMAN.]

NAN. Now, St. Mark
Deliver us! anon she'll beat her
women,

Because her nose is red.

[Re-enter 1 with 2 WOMAN.]

LADY P. I pray you view
This tire,⁹⁹ forsooth: are all things apt,
or no?

1 WOM. One hair a little here sticks
out, forsooth.

LADY P. Does't so, forsooth! and
where was your dear sight,
When it did so, forsooth! What now!
birdey'd? ¹⁰⁰

And you, too? Pray you, both ap-
proach and mend it.

Now, by that light I muse you're not
asham'd!

I, that have preach'd these things so oft
unto you,

Read you the principles, argu'd all the
grounds,

Disputed every fitness, every grace,
Call'd you to counsel of so frequent
dressings—

NAN. [aside.] More carefully than
of your fame or honour.

LADY P. Made you acquainted what
an ample dowry
The knowledge of these things would be
unto you,

Able alone to get you noble husbands
At your return: and you thus to neglect
it!

Besides, you seeing what a curious
nation

⁹⁹ head-dress.

¹⁰⁰ short-sighted (?)

Th' Italians are, what will they say of me?

"The English lady cannot dress herself."

Here's a fine imputation to our country! Well, go your ways, and stay i' the next room.

This fucus¹⁰¹ was too coarse too; it's no matter.—

Good sir, you'll give 'em entertainment?

[*Exeunt NANO and WAITING-WOMEN.*]

VOLP. The storm comes toward me.

LADY P. [*goes to the couch.*] How does my Volpone?

VOLP. Troubl'd with noise, I cannot sleep; I dreamt

That a strange fury ent'red now my house,

And, with the dreadful tempest of her breath,

Did cleave my roof asunder.

LADY P. Believe me, and I Had the most fearful dream, could I remember 't—

VOLP. [*aside.*] Out on my fate! I have given her the occasion How to torment me: she will tell me hers.

LADY P. Methought the golden mediocrity, Polite, and delicate—

VOLP. O, if you do love me, No more: I sweat, and suffer, at the mention

Of any dream; feel how I tremble yet.

LADY P. Alas, good soul! the passion of the heart.

Seed-pearl were good now, boil'd with syrup of apples,

Tincture of gold, and coral, citron-pills, Your elecampane¹⁰² root, myrobalanes¹⁰³ —

VOLP. Ay me, I have ta'en a grasshopper by the wing!¹⁰⁴

LADY P. Burnt silk and amber. You have muscadell

Good i' the house—

VOLP. You will not drink, and part?

¹⁰¹ paint for the face.

¹⁰² horse-beal, a medicinal herb.

¹⁰³ an astringent kind of plum.

¹⁰⁴ "The faster you hold them by the wings, the louder they scream."

LADY P. No, fear not that. I doubt we shall not get

Some English saffron, half a dram would serve;

Your sixteen cloves, a little musk, dried mints;

Bugloss, and barley-meal—

VOLP. [*aside.*] She's in again! Before I feign'd diseases, now I have one.

LADY P. And these appli'd with a right scarlet cloth.

VOLP. [*aside.*] Another flood of words! a very torrent!

LADY P. Shall I, sir, make you a poultice?

VOLP. No, no, no. I'm very well, you need prescribe no more.

LADY P. I have a little studied physic; but now

I'm all for music, save, i' the forenoons, An hour or two for painting. I would have

A lady, indeed, to have all letters and arts,

Be able to discourse, to write, to paint, But principal, as Plato holds, your music,

And so does wise Pythagoras, I take it,

Is your true rapture: when there is content¹⁰⁵

In face, in voice, and clothes: and is, indeed,

Our sex's chiefest ornament.

VOLP. The poet As old in time as Plato, and as knowing, Says that your highest female grace is silence.

LADY P. Which of your poets? Petrarch, or Tasso, or Dante?

Guarini? Ariosto? Aretine? Cieco di Hadria? I have read them all.

VOLP. [*aside.*] Is everything a-cause to my destruction?

LADY P. I think I have two or three of 'em about me.

VOLP. [*aside.*] The sun, the sea, will sooner both stand still Than her eternal tongue! nothing can scape it.

LADY P. Here's Pastor Fido—

¹⁰⁵ harmony.

VOLP. [*aside.*] Profess obstinate silence;

That's now my safest.

LADY P. All our English writers. I mean such as are happy in th' Italian, Will deign to steal out of this author, mainly;

Almost as much as from Montagnié: He has so modern and facile a vein, Fitting the time, and catching the court-ear!

Your Petrarch is more passionate, yet he,

In days of sonnetting, trusted 'em with much:

Dante is hard, and few can understand him.

But for a desperate wit, there's Aretine; Only his pictures are a little ob-scene——

You mark me not.

VOLP. Alas, my mind's perturb'd. LADY P. Why, in such cases, we must cure ourselves,

Make use of our philosophy——

VOLP. Oh me!

LADY P. And as we find our passions do rebel,

Encounter them with reason, or divert 'em,

By giving scope unto some other humour

Of lesser danger: as, in politic bodies, There's nothing more doth overwhelm the judgment,

And cloud the understanding, than too much

Settling and fixing, and, as 'twere, sub-siding

Upon one object. For the incorpora-ting

Of these same outward things, into that part

Which we call mental, leaves some cer-tain faeces

That stop the organs, and, as Plato says,

Assassinate our knowledge.

VOLP. [*aside.*] Now, the spirit Of patience help me!

LADY P. Come, in faith, I must Visit you more a days; and make you well:

Laugh and be lusty.

VOLP. [*aside.*] My good angel save me!

LADY P. There was but one sole man in all the world

With whom I e'er could sympathise; and he

Would lie you, often, three, four hours together

To hear me speak; and be sometime so rapt,

As he would answer me quite from the purpose,

Like you, and you are like him, just. I'll discourse,

An 't be but only, sir, to bring you asleep,

How we did spend our time and loves together,

For some six years.

VOLP. Oh, oh, oh, oh, oh, oh!

LADY P. For we were coetanei,¹⁰⁶ and brought up——

VOLP. Some power, some fate, some fortune rescue me!

SCENE V.¹⁰⁷

[*To them enter MOSCA.*]

MOS. God save you, madam!

LADY P. Good sir.

VOLP. Mosca! welcome, Welcome to my redemption.

MOS. Why, sir?

VOLP. Oh, Rid me of this my torture, quickly, there;

My madam with the everlasting voice: The bells, in time of pestilence, ne'er made

Like noise, or were in that perpetual motion!

The Cock-pit comes not near it. All my house,

But now, steam'd like a bath with her thick breath,

A lawyer could not have been heard; nor scarce

Another woman, such a hail of words She has let fall. For hell's sake, rid her hence.

MOS. Has she presented?

VOLP. Oh, I do not care;

¹⁰⁶ of the same age. ¹⁰⁷ The same.

I'll take her absence upon any price,
With any loss.

Mos. Madam——

LADY P. I ha' brought your patron
A toy, a cap here, of mine own work.

Mos. 'Tis well.
I had forgot to tell you I saw your
knight

Where you would little think it.——

LADY P. Where?

Mos. Marry,
Where yet, if you make haste, you may
apprehend him,

Rowing upon the water in a gondole,
With the most cunning courtesan of
Venice.

LADY P. Is't true?

Mos. Pursue 'em, and
believe your eyes:
Leave me to make your gift.

[Exit LADY POLITIC hastily.]

I knew 't would take:
For, lightly, they that use themselves
most licence,
Are still most jealous.

VOLP. Mosca, hearty thanks
For thy quick fiction, and delivery of
me.

Now to my hopes, what sayst thou?

[Re-enter LADY P. WOULD-BE.]

LADY P. But do you hear, sir?——

VOLP. Again! I fear a paroxysm.

LADY P. Which way
Row'd they together?

Mos. Toward the Rialto.

LADY P. I pray you lend me your
dwarf.

Mos. I pray you take him.
[Exit LADY POLITIC.]

Your hopes, sir, are like happy blossoms, fair,
And promise timely fruit, if you will
stay

But the maturing; keep you at your
couch,

Corbaccio will arrive straight, with the
will;

When he is gone, I'll tell you more.

[Exit.]

VOLP. My blood,
My spirits are return'd; I am alive:
And, like your wanton gamester at
primero,

Whose thought had whisper'd to him,
not go¹⁰⁸ less,
Methinks I lie, and draw——for an
encounter.¹⁰⁹

SCENE VI.¹²⁰

[Enter MOSCA, BONARIO.]

Mos. Sir, here conceal'd [*opening a door*] you may hear all. But,
pray you,

Have patience, sir; [*one knocks*] the
same's your father knocks:

I am compell'd to leave you. [Exit.]

BON. Do so.—Yet
Cannot my thought imagine this a
truth. [Goes in.]

SCENE VII.¹²¹

[Enter MOSCA, CORVINO, CELIA.]

Mos. Death on me! you are come
too soon, what meant you?
Did not I say I would send?

CORV. Yes, but I fear'd
You might forget it, and then they pre-
vent us.

Mos. Prevent! [*aside*.] Did e'er
man haste so for his horns?

A courtier would not ply it so for a
place.

—Well, now there is no helping it, stay
here;

I'll presently return. [Exit.]

CORV. Where are you, Celia?
You know not wherefore I have brought
you hither?

CEL. Not well, except you told me.

CORV. Now I will:
Hark hither. [They retire to one side.]

[Re-enter MOSCA.]

Mos. [*to BONARIO*.] Sir, your father
hath sent word

It will be half an hour ere he come;
And therefore, if you please to walk the
while

Into that gallery—at the upper end,

¹⁰⁸ hazard.

¹⁰⁹ Terms in primero. Volpone is lying in the alcove at the back of the stage, and at the end of the scene the curtains close on him.

¹²⁰ The same.

¹²¹ The same.

There are some books to entertain the time:

And I'll take care no man shall come unto you, sir.

BON. Yes, I will stay there.—
[*aside.*] I do doubt this fellow.
[*Exit.*]

Mos. [*looking after him.*] There;
he is far enough; he can hear nothing:

And for his father, I can keep him off.¹¹²

CORV. Nay, now, there is no starting back, and therefore,
Resolve upon it: I have so decreed.

It must be done. Nor would I move 't afore,
Because I would avoid all shifts and tricks,

That might deny me.

CEL. Sir, let me beseech you,
Affect not these strange trials; if you doubt

My chastity, why, lock me up for ever;
Make me the heir of darkness. Let me live

Where I may please your fears, if not your trust.

CORV. Believe it, I have no such humour, I.

All that I speak I mean; yet I'm not mad;

Not horn-mad, you see? Go to, show yourself

Obedient, and a wife.

CEL. O heaven!

CORV. I say it,

Do so.

CEL. Was this the train?

CORV. I've told you reasons;

What the physicians have set down; how much

It may concern me; what my engagements are;

My means, and the necessity of those means

For my recovery: wherefore, if you be

Loyal and mine, be won, respect my venture.

CEL. Before your honour?

CORV. Honour! tut, a breath:

¹¹² At this point, Mosca goes back and opens the curtains, discovering Volpone on his couch.

There's no such thing in nature; a mere term

Invented to awe fools. What is my gold

The worse for touching, clothes for being look'd on?

Why, this 's no more. An old decrepit wretch,

That has no sense, no sinew; takes his meat

With others' fingers: only knows to gape

When you do scald his gums; a voice, a shadow;

And what can this man hurt you?

CEL. [*aside.*] Lord! what spirit
Is this hath ent'red him?

CORV. And for your fame,
That's such a jig; as if I would go tell it,

Cry it on the Piazza! Who shall know it

But he that cannot speak it, and this fellow,

Whose lips are i' my pocket? Save yourself,

(If you'll proclaim 't, you may,) I know no other

Should come to know it.

CEL. Are heaven and saints then nothing?

Will they be blind or stupid?

CORV. How!

CEL. Good sir,
Be jealous still, emulate them; and think

What hate they burn with toward every sin.

CORV. I grant you: if I thought it were a sin

I would not urge you. Should I offer this

To some young Frenchman, or hot Tuscan blood

That had read Aretine, conn'd all his prints,

Knew every quirk within lust's labyrinth,

And were profest critic in lechery;

And I would look upon him, and applaud him,

This were a sin: but here, 'tis contrary,
A pious work, mere charity for physic,

And honest polity, to assure mine own.

CEL. O heaven! canst thou suffer
such a change?

VOLP. Thou art mine honour, Mosca,
and my pride,
My joy, my tickling my delight! Go
bring 'em.

Mos. [*advancing.*] Please you draw
near, sir.

CORV. Come on, what——
You will not be rebellious? By that
light——

Mos. Sir, Signior Corvino, here, is
come to see you.

VOLP. Oh!

Mos. And hearing of the consulta-
tion had,
So lately, for your health, is come to
offer,

Or rather, sir, to prostitute——

CORV. Thanks, sweet Mosca.

Mos. Freely, unask'd, or unin-
treated——

CORV. Well.

Mos. As the true fervent instance of
his love,
His own most fair and proper wife; the
beauty

Only of price in Venice——

CORV. 'Tis well urg'd.

Mos. To be your comfortress, and
to preserve you.

VOLP. Alas, I am past, already!
Pray you, thank him
For his good care and promptness; but
for that,

'Tis a vain labour e'en to fight 'gainst
heaven;

Applying fire to stone—uh, uh, uh, uh!
[*Coughing.*]

Making a dead leaf grow again. I take
His wishes gently, though; and you
may tell him

What I have done for him: marry, my
state is hopeless.

Will him to pray for me; and to use his
fortune

With reverence when he comes to 't.

Mos. Do you hear, sir?
Go to him with your wife.

CORV. Heart of my father!
Wilt thou persist thus? Come, I pray
thee, come.

Thou seest 'tis nothing, Celia. By this
hand

I shall grow violent. Come, do't, I
say.

CEL. Sir, kill me, rather: I will take
down poison,

Eat burning coals, do anything——
CORV. Be damn'd!

Heart, I will drag thee hence home by
the hair;

Cry thee a strumpet through the
streets; rip up

Thy mouth unto thine ears; and slit
thy nose,

Like a raw rochet!¹¹³—Do not tempt
me; come,

Yield, I am loth—Death! I will buy
some slave

Whom I will kill, and bind thee to him
alive;

And at my windore hang you forth, de-
vising

Some monstrous crime, which I, in
capital letters,

Will eat into thy flesh with aquafortis,
And burning cor'sives,¹¹⁴ on this stub-
born breast.

Now, by the blood thou hast incens'd,
I'll do it!

CEL. Sir, what you please, you may;
I am your martyr.

CORV. Be not thus obstinate, I ha'
not deserv'd it:

Think who it is intreats you. Prithee,
sweet;—

Good faith, thou shalt have jewels,
gowns, attires,

What thou wilt think, and ask. Do but
go kiss him.

Or touch him but. For my sake. At
my suit——

This once. No! not! I shall remember
this.

Will you disgrace me thus? Do you
thirst my undoing?

Mos. Nay, gentle lady, be advis'd.

CORV. No, no.
She has watch'd her time. God's
precious, this is scurvy,

'Tis very scurvy; and you are——

Mos. Nay, good sir.

CORV. An arrant locust—by heaven,
a locust!—

¹¹³ "A rochet or rouget, so named from its
red colour, is a fish of the gurnet kind, but
not so large." (Whalley.)

¹¹⁴ corrosives.

Whore, crocodile, that hast thy tears prepar'd,

Expecting how thou 'lt bid 'em flow——

Mos. Nay, pray you, sir! She will consider.

CEL. Would my life would serve To satisfy——

CORV. 'Sdeath! if she would but speak to him,

And save my reputation, 't were somewhat;

But spitefully to affect my utter ruin!

Mos. Ay, now you have put your fortune in her hands.

Why, i' faith, it is her modesty, I must quit her.

If you were absent, she would be more coming;

I know it: and dare undertake for her. What woman can before her husband?

Pray you, Let us depart and leave her here.

CORV. Sweet Celia, Thou mayst redeem all yet; I'll say no more:

If not, esteem yourself as lost. Nay, stay there. *[Exit with MOSCA.]*

CEL. O God, and his good angels! whither, whither,

Is shame fled human breasts? that with such ease,

Men dare put off your honours, and their own?

Is that, which ever was a cause of life, Now plac'd beneath the basest circumstance,

And modesty an exile made, for money?

VOLP. Ay, in Corvino, and such earth-fed minds,

[He leaps from his couch.] That never tasted the true heaven of love.

Assure thee, Celia, he that would sell thee,

Only for hope of gain, and that uncertain,

He would have sold his part of Paradise

For ready money, had he met a copeman.¹¹⁵

Why art thou maz'd to see me thus reviv'd?

Rather applaud thy beauty's miracle; 'Tis thy great work, that hath, not now alone,

But sundry times rais'd me, in several shapes,

And, but this morning, like a mountebank,

To see thee at thy windore: ay, before I would have left my practice, for thy love,

In varying figures, I would have contended

With the blue Proteus, or the hornèd flood.¹¹⁶

Now art thou welcome.

CEL. Sir!

VOLP. Nay, fly me not, Nor let thy false imagination

That I was bed-rid, make thee think I am so:

Thou shalt not find it. I am now as fresh,

As hot, as high, and in as jovial plight

As, when, in that so celebrated scene, At recitation of our comedy,

For entertainment of the great Valois, I acted young Antinous; and attracted

The eyes and ears of all the ladies present,

To admire each graceful gesture, note, and footing. *[Sings.]*

SONG¹¹⁷

Come, my Celia, let us prove
While we can, the sports of love,
Time will not be ours for ever,
He, at length, our good will sever;
Spend not then his gifts in vain:
Suns that set may rise again;
But if once we lose this light,
'Tis with us perpetual night.
Why should we defer our joys?
Fame and rumour are but toys.
Cannot we delude the eyes
Of a few poor household spies?
Or his easier ears beguile,
Thus removed by our wile?
'Tis no sin love's fruits to steal;
But the sweet thefts to reveal:
To be taken, to be seen,
These have crimes accounted been.

¹¹⁵ "Achelotis, of whose 'contention' there is a pretty story in Ovid." (Gifford.)

¹¹⁷ Imitated, in part, from Catullus.

¹¹⁶ chapman, merchant.

CEL. Some serene ¹¹⁸ blast me, or
dire lightning strike
This my offending face!

VOLP. Why droops my Celia?
Thou hast, in place of a base husband
found

A worthy lover: use thy fortune well,
With secrecy and pleasure. See, be-
hold,

What thou art queen of; not in expec-
tation,

As I feed others: but possess'd and
crown'd.

See, here, a rope of pearl; and each
more orient ¹¹⁹

Then the brave Aegyptian queen
carous'd:

Dissolve and drink 'em. See, a car-
buncle,

May put out both the eyes of our St.
Mark;

A diamond would have bought Lollia
Paulina,

When she came in like star-light, hid
with jewels

That were the spoils of provinces; take
these

And wear, and lose 'em; yet remains an
earring

To purchase them again, and this whole
state.

A gem but worth a private patrimony
Is nothing; we will eat such at a
meal.

The heads of parrots, tongues of
nightingales,

The brains of peacocks, and of
estriches,

Shall be our food, and, could we get the
phoenix,

Though nature lost her kind, she were
our dish.

CEL. Good sir, these things might
move a mind affected

With such delights; but I, whose in-
nocence

Is all I can think wealthy, or worth th'
enjoying,

And which, once lost, I have nought to
lose beyond it,

Cannot be taken with these sensual
baits:

If you have conscience—

VOLP. 'Tis the beggar's virtue;
If thou hast wisdom, hear me, Celia.

Thy baths shall be the juice of July-
flowers,

Spirit of roses, and of violets,
The milk of unicorns, and panthers'

breath
Gather'd in bags, and mix'd with Cre-
tan wines.

Our drink shall be preparèd gold and
amber;

Which we will take until my roof whirl
round

With the vertigo: and my dwarf shall
dance,

My eunuch sing, my fool make up the
antic,

Whilst we, in changèd shapes, act
Ovid's tales,

Thou, like Europa now, and I like
Jove,

Then I like Mars, and thou like
Erycine:

So of the rest, till we have quite run
through,

And wearied all the fables of the
gods.

Then will I have thee in more modern
forms,

Attirèd like some sprightly dame of
France,

Brave Tuscan lady, or proud Spanish
beauty;

Sometimes unto the Persian sophy's
wife;

Or the grand signior's mistress; and for
change,

To one of our most artful courtesans,
Or some quick Negro, or cold Russian;

And I will meet thee in as many
shapes:

Where we may so transfuse our wan-
d'ring souls

Out at our lips, and score up sums of
pleasures. [Sings.]

That the curious shall not know
How to tell them as they flow;
And the envious, when they find
What their number is, be pin'd.

CEL. If you have ears that will be
pierc'd—or eyes

That can be open'd—a heart that may
be touch'd—

¹¹⁸ mildew.

¹¹⁹ brilliant.

Or any part that yet sounds man about
 you—
 If you have touch of holy saints—or
 heaven—
 Do me the grace to let me scape:—if
 not,
 Be bountiful and kill me. You do
 know,
 I am a creature, hither ill betray'd,
 By one whose shame I would forget it
 were:
 If you will deign me neither of these
 graces,
 Yet feed your wrath, sir, rather than
 your lust,
 (It is a vice comes nearer manli-
 ness,)
 And punish that unhappy crime of
 nature,
 Which you miscall my beauty: flay my
 face,
 Or poison it with ointments for seduc-
 ing
 Your blood to this rebellion. Rub these
 hands
 With what may cause an eating
 leprosy,
 E'en to my bones and marrow: any-
 thing
 That may disfavor me, save in my
 honour—
 And I will kneel to you, pray for you,
 pay down
 A thousand hourly vows, sir, for your
 health;
 Report, and think you virtuous—
 VOLP. Think me cold,
 Frozen, and impotent, and so report
 me?
 That I had Nestor's hernia, thou
 wouldst think.
 I do degenerate, and abuse my na-
 tion,
 To play with opportunity thus long;
 I should have done the act, and then
 have parley'd.
 Yield, or I'll force thee. [*Seizes her.*]
 CEL. O! just God!
 VOLP. In vain—
 BON. [*leaps out from where Mosca
 had placed him.*] Forbear, foul
 ravisher! libidinous swine!
 Free the forc'd lady, or thou diest, im-
 postor.

But that I'm loth to snatch thy punish-
 ment
 Out of the hand of justice, thou
 shouldst yet
 Be made the timely sacrifice of ven-
 geance,
 Before this altar and this dross, thy
 idol.—
 Lady, let's quit the place, it is the
 den
 Of villany; fear nought, you have a
 guard:
 And he ere long shall meet his just
 reward.
 [*Exeunt BONARIO and CELIA.*]
 VOLP. Fall on me, roof, and bury
 me in ruin!
 Become my grave, that wert my
 shelter! O!
 I am unmask'd, unspirited, undone,
 Betray'd to beggary, to infamy—

SCENE VIII.¹²⁰

[*VOLPONE. Enter MOSCA, wounded
 and bleeding.*]

Mos. Where shall I run, most
 wretched shame of men,
 To beat out my unlucky brains?

VOLP. Here, here.
 What! dost thou bleed?

Mos. O, that his well-driv'n sword
 Had been so courteous to have cleft me
 down

Unto the navel, ere I liv'd to see
 My life, my hopes, my spirits, my
 patron, all

Thus desperately engagèd by my
 error!

VOLP. Woe on thy fortune!

Mos. And my follies, sir.

VOLP. Thou hast made me miser-
 able.

Mos. And myself, sir.
 Who would have thought he would
 have heark'ned so?

VOLP. What shall we do?

Mos. I know not; if my heart
 Could expiate the mischance, I'd pluck
 it out.

Will you be pleas'd to hang me, or cut
 my throat?

¹²⁰ The same.

And I'll requite you, sir. Let's die like
Romans,¹²¹
Since we have liv'd like Grecians.

[*They knock without.*]

VOLP. Hark! who's there?
I hear some footing; officers, the saffi,¹²²
Come to apprehend us! I do feel the
brand

Hissing already at my forehead; now
Mine ears are boring.

Mos. To your couch, sir, you,
Make that place good, however. [VOL-
PONE *lies down as before.*]
Guilty men
Suspect what they deserve still. Sig-
nior Corbaccio!

SCENE IX.¹²³

[*To them enter CORBACCIO.*]

CORB. Why, how now, Mosca?

Mos. O, undone, amaz'd, sir.
Your son, I know not by what acci-
dent,
Acquainted with your purpose to my
patron,
Touching your will, and making him
your heir,
Ent'red our house with violence, his
sword drawn,
Sought for you, called you wretch, un-
natural,
Vow'd he would kill you.

CORB. Me!

Mos. Yes, and my patron.

CORB. This act shall disinherit him
indeed:
Here is the will.

Mos. 'Tis well, sir.

CORB. Right and well:
Be you as careful now for me.

[*Enter VOLTORE behind.*]

Mos. My life, sir,
Is not more tender'd; I am only yours.

CORB. How does he? Will he die
shortly, think'st thou?

Mos. I fear
He'll outlast May.

CORB. To-day?

Mos. No, last out May, sir.

¹²¹ i.e. by suicide.
¹²² bailiff's attendants.

¹²³ The same.

CORB. Couldst thou not gi' him a
dram?

Mos. O, by no means, sir.

CORB. Nay, I'll not bid you.

VOLT. [*coming forward.*] This is a
knave, I see.

Mos. [*aside, seeing VOLTORE.*] How!
Signior VOLTORE! did he hear me?

VOLT. Parasite!

Mos. Who's that?—O, sir, most
timely welcome—

VOLT. Scarce,
To the discovery of your tricks, I fear.
You are his, *only*? And mine also, are
you not?

Mos. Who? I, sir!

VOLT. You, sir. What device is this
About a will?

Mos. A plot for you, sir.

VOLT. Come,
Put not your foists¹²⁴ upon me; I shall
scent 'em.

Mos. Did you not hear it?

VOLT. Yes, I hear Corbaccio
Hath made your patron there his heir.

Mos. 'Tis true,
By my device, drawn to it by my
plot,
With hope—

VOLT. Your patron should
reciprocate?
And you have promis'd?

Mos. For your good I did, sir.
Nay, more, I told his son, brought, hid
him here,

Where he might hear his father pass
the deed;

Being persuaded to it by this thought,
sir,

That the unnaturalness, first, of the
act,

And then his father's oft disclaiming in
him,

(Which I did mean t' help on), would
sure enrage him

To do some violence upon his parent,
On which the law should take sufficient
hold,

And you be stated in a double hope.
Truth be my comfort, and my con-
science,

My only aim was to dig you a fortune
Out of these two rotten sepulchres—

¹²⁴ deceptions.

VOLT. I cry thee mercy, Mosca.
Mos. —Worth your patience,
And your great merit, sir. And see the
change!

VOLT. Why, what success?

Mos. Most hapless! you must
help, sir.

Whilst we expected th' old raven, in
comes

Corvino's wife, sent hither by her hus-
band——

VOLT. What, with a present?

Mos. No, sir, on visitation;
(I'll tell you how anon) and staying
long,

The youth he grows impatient, rushes
forth,

Seizeth the lady, wounds me, makes her
swear

(Or he would murder her, that was his
vow)

T' affirm my patron to have done her
rape:

Which how unlike it is, you see! and
hence,

With that pretext he's gone, t' accuse
his father,

Defame my patron, defeat you——

VOLT. Where 's her husband?
Let him be sent for straight.

Mos. Sir, I'll go fetch him.

VOLT. Bring him to the Scrutineo.¹²⁵

Mos. Sir, I will.

VOLT. This must be stopt.

Mos. O, you do nobly, sir.

Alas, 'twas labour'd all, sir, for your
good;

Nor was there want of counsel in the
plot:

But Fortune can, at any time, o'er-
throw

The projects of a hundred learned
clerks, sir.

CORB. [*listening.*] What's that?

VOLT. Wilt please you, sir, to
go along?

[*Exit CORBACCIO, followed
by VOLTORE.*]

Mos. Patron, go in, and pray for
our success.

VOLP. [*rising from his couch.*] Need
makes devotion: heaven your
labour bless! [*Exeunt.*]

¹²⁵ Senate House.

ACT IV

SCENE I.¹²⁶

[*Enter SIR POLITIC WOULD-BE.
PEREGRINE.*]

SIR P. I told you, sir, it was a plot;
you see

What observation is! You mention'd
me

For some instructions: I will tell you,
sir,

(Since we are met here in this height of
Venice,)

Some few particulars I have set down,
Only for this meridian, fit to be
known

Of your crude traveller; and they are
these.

I will not touch, sir, at your phrase, or
clothes,

For they are old.

PER. Sir, I have better.

SIR P. Pardon,

I meant, as they are themes.

PER. O, sir, proceed:
I'll slander you no more of wit, good
sir.

SIR P. First, for your garb, it must
be grave and serious,

Very reserv'd and lockt; not tell a
secret

On any terms, not to your father;
scarce

A fable, but with caution: make sure
choice

Both of your company and discourse;
beware

You never speak a truth——

PER. How!

SIR P. Not to strangers,

For those be they you must converse
with most;

Others I would not know, sir, but at
distance

So as I still might be a saver in them:
You shall have tricks else past upon
you hourly.

And then, for your religion, profess
none,

But wonder at the diversity of all;
And, for your part, protest, were there
no other

no other

¹²⁶ A street.

But simply the laws o' th' land, you could content you.

Nic. Machiavel and Monsieur Bodin,¹²⁷ both

Were of this mind. Then must you learn the use

And handling of your silver fork at meals,

The metal of your glass; (these are main matters

With your Italian;) and to know the hour

When you must eat your melons and your figs.

PER. Is that a point of state too?

SIR P. Here it is: For your Venetian, if he see a man

Preposterous in the least, he has him straight;

He has; he strips him. I'll acquaint you, sir.

I now have liv'd here 'tis some fourteen months:

Within the first week of my landing here,

All took me for a citizen of Venice,

I knew the forms so well——

PER. [*aside.*] And nothing else.

SIR P. I had read Contarene,¹²⁸ took me a house,

Dealt with my Jews to furnish it with movables——

Well, if I could but find one man, one man

To mine own heart, whom I durst trust, I would——

PER. What, what, sir?

SIR P. Make him rich; make him a fortune;

He should not think again. I would command it.

PER. As how?

SIR P. With certain projects that I have;

Which I may not discover.

PER. [*aside.*] If I had

But one to wager with, I would lay odds now,

He tells me instantly.

SIR P. One is, and that

I care not greatly who knows, to serve the state

Of Venice with red herrings for three years,

And at a certain rate, from Rotterdam, Where I have correspondence. There's

a letter,

Sent me from one o' th' states, and to that purpose:

He cannot write his name, but that's his mark.

PER. He is a chandler?

SIR P. No, a cheesemonger.

There are some others too with whom I treat

About the same negotiation;

And I will undertake it: for 'tis thus.

I'll do 't with ease, I have cast¹²⁹ it all.

Your hoy¹³⁰

Carries but three men in her, and a boy;

And she shall make me three returns a year:

So if there come but one of three, I save;

If two, I can defalk:¹³¹——but this is now,

If my main project fail.

PER. Then you have others?

SIR P. I should be loth to draw the subtle air

Of such a place, without my thousand aims.

I'll not dissemble, sir: where'er I come,

I love to be considerative; and 'tis true,

I have at my free hours thought upon

Some certain goods unto the state of Venice,

Which I do call my Cautions; and, sir, which

I mean, in hope of pension, to propound

To the Great Council, then unto the Forty,

So to the Ten. My means are made already——

PER. By whom?

SIR P. Sir, one that though his place be obscure,

¹²⁹ reckoned.

¹³⁰ a small passenger sloop.

¹³¹ cut off. reduce.

¹²⁷ a famous French lawyer.

¹²⁸ Gasp. Contarini, author of a work on Venice.

Yet he can sway, and they will hear him. He's

A *commandadore*.

PER. What! a common serjeant?

SIR P. Sir, such as they are, put it in their mouths,

What they should say, sometimes; as well as greater:

I think I have my notes to show you——

[*Searching his pockets.*]

PER. Good sir.

SIR P. But you shall swear unto me, on your gentry,

Not to anticipate——

PER. I, sir!

SIR P. Nor reveal

A circumstance——My paper is not with me.

PER. O, but you can remember, sir.

SIR P. My first is Concerning tinder-boxes. You must know,

No family is here without its box.

Now, sir, it being so portable a thing,

Put case, that you or I were ill affected Unto the state, sir; with it in our pockets,

Might not I go into the Arsenal,

Or you come out again, and none the wiser?

PER. Except yourself, sir.

SIR P. Go to, then. I therefore Advertise to the state, how fit it were That none but such as were known patriots,

Sound lovers of their country, should be suffer'd

T' enjoy them in their houses; and even those

Seal'd at some office, and at such a business

As might not lurk in pockets.

PER. Admirable!

SIR P. My next is, how t' inquire, and be resolv'd

By present demonstration, whether a ship,

Newly arriv'd from Soria,¹³² or from Any suspected part of all the Levant, Be guilty of the plague: and where they use

To lie out forty, fifty days, sometimes,

¹³² Syria.

About the Lazaretto, for their trial; I'll save that charge and loss unto the merchant,

And in an hour clear the doubt.

PER. Indeed, sir!

SIR P. Or——I will lose my labour.

PER. My faith, that's much.

SIR P. Nay, sir, conceive me. It will cost me in onions,

Some thirty livres——

PER. Which is one pound sterling.

SIR P. Beside my waterworks: for this I do, sir.

First, I bring in your ship 'twixt two brick walls;

But those the state shall venture. On the one

I strain me a fair tarpauling, and in that

I stick my onions, cut in halves; the other

Is full of loopholes, out of which I thrust

The noses of my bellows; and those bellows

I keep, with waterworks, in perpetual motion,

Which is the easiest matter of a hundred.

Now, sir, your onion, which doth naturally

Attract th' infection, and your bellows blowing

The air upon him, will show instantly, By his chang'd colour, if there be contagion;

Or else remain as fair as at the first,

Now it is known, 'tis nothing.

PER. You are right, sir.

SIR P. I would I had my note.

PER. Faith, so would I:

But you ha' done well for once, sir.

SIR P. Were I false, Or would be made so, I could show you

reasons

How I could sell this state now to the Turk,

Spite of their galleys, or their——

[*Examining his papers.*]

PER. Pray you, Sir Pol.

SIR P. I have 'em not about me.

PER. That I fear'd.

They are there, sir?

SIR P. No, this is my diary,

Wherein I note my actions of the day.

PER. Pray you let's see, sir. What is here? *Notandum*, [*Reads.*]

"A rat had gnawn my spur-leathers; notwithstanding,

I put on new, and did go forth; but first I threw three beans over the threshold.

Item,

I went and bought two toothpicks, whereof one

I burst immediately, in a discourse With a Dutch merchant, 'bout *ragion' del stato*.¹³³

From him I went and paid a *moccinigo*.¹³⁴

For piecing my silk stockings; by the way

I cheapen'd¹³⁵ sprats; and at St. Mark's I urin'd."

'Faith these are politic notes!

SIR P. Sir, I do slip No action of my life, but thus I quote¹³⁶ it.

PER. Believe me, it is wise!

SIR P. Nay, sir, read forth.

SCENE II.¹³⁷

[*Enter, at a distance, LADY POLITIC WOULD-BE, NANO, and two WAITING-WOMEN.*]

LADY P. Where should this loose knight be, trow? Sure he's hous'd.

NAN. Why, then he's fast.

LADY P. Ay, he plays both¹³⁸ with me.

I pray you stay. This heat will do more harm

To my complexion than his heart is worth.

(I do not care to hinder, but to take him.)

How it comes off!

[*Rubbing her cheeks.*]

1 WOM. My master's yonder.

LADY P. Where?

2 WOM. With a young gentleman.

LADY P. That same's the party:

¹³³ politics.

¹³⁵ bargained for.

¹³⁴ about ninepence.

¹³⁶ note.

¹³⁷ The same.

¹³⁸ both "fast and loose," the name of a game.

In man's apparel! Pray you, sir, jog my knight:

I will be tender to his reputation, However he demerit.

SIR P. [*seeing her.*] My lady!

PER. Where?

SIR P. 'Tis she indeed, sir; you shall know her. She is,

Were she not mine, a lady of that merit, For fashion and behaviour; and for beauty

I durst compare——

PER. It seems you are not jealous, That dare commend her.

SIR P. Nay, and for discourse——

PER. Being your wife, she cannot miss that.

SIR P. [*introducing PEREGRINE.*]

Madam,

Here is a gentleman, pray you, use him fairly;

He seems a youth, but he is——

LADY P. None.

SIR P. Yes, one

Has put his face as soon into the world——

LADY P. You mean, as early? But to-day?

SIR P. How's this?

LADY P. Why, in this habit, sir; you apprehend me.

Well, Master Would-be, this doth not become you;

I had thought the odour, sir, of your good name

Had been more precious to you; that you would not

Have done this dire massacre on your honour;

One of your gravity, and rank besides! But knights, I see, care little for the oath

They make to ladies; chiefly their own ladies.

SIR P. Now, by my spurs, the symbol of my knighthood——

PER. [*aside.*] Lord, how his brain is humbl'd for an oath!

SIR P. I reach¹³⁹ you not.

LADY P. Right, sir, your polity May bear it through thus. Sir, a word with you. [*To PEREGRINE.*]

I would be loth to contest publicly

¹³⁹ understand.

With any gentlewoman, or to seem
Froward, or violent, as the courtier
says;

It comes too near rusticity in a lady,
Which I would shun by all means: and
however

I may deserve from Master Would-be,
yet

T' have one fair gentlewoman thus be
made

The unkind instrument to wrong an-
other,

And one she knows not, ay, and to
perséver;

In my poor judgment, is not warranted
From being a solecism in our sex,
If not in manners.

PER. How is this!

SIR P. Sweet madam,
Come nearer to your aim.

LADY P. Marry, and will, sir.
Since you provoke me with your impu-
dence,

And laughter of your light land-syren
here,

Your Sporus, your hermaphrodite—

PER. What's here?
Poetic fury and historic storms!

SIR P. The gentleman, believe it, is
of worth

And of our nation.

LADY P. Ay, your Whitefriars na-
tion.¹⁴⁰

Come, I blush for you, Master Would-
be, I;

And am asham'd you shall ha' no more
forehead

Than thus to be the patron, or St.
George,

To a lewd harlot, a base fricatrice,¹⁴¹

A female devil, in a male outside.

SIR P. Nay,
An you be such a one, I must bid adieu
To your delights. The case appears
too liquid. [Exit.]

LADY P. Ay, you may carry 't clear,
with you state-face!

But for your carnival concupiscence,
Who here is fled for liberty of con-
science,

¹⁴⁰ Whitefriars was at this time a privileged
spot, in which fraudulent debtors, gamblers,
prostitutes, and other outcasts of society
usually resided. (Gifford.)

¹⁴¹ prostitute.

From furious persecution of the mar-
shal,

Her will I disc'ple.¹⁴²

PER. This is fine, i 'faith!
And do you use this often? Is this part
Of your wit's exercise, 'gainst you have
occasion?

Madam—

LADY P. Go to, sir.

PER. Do you hear me, lady?
Why, if your knight have set you to
beg shirts,

Or to invite me home, you might have
done it

A nearer way by far.

LADY P. This cannot work you
Out of my snare.

PER. Why, am I in it, then?
Indeed your husband told me you were
fair,

And so you are; only your nose inclines,
That side that's next the sun, to the
queen-apple.¹⁴³

LADY P. This cannot be endur'd by
any patience.

SCENE III.¹⁴⁴

[To them enter MOSCA.]

Mos. What is the matter, madam?

LADY P. If the senate
Right not my quest in this, I will pro-
test 'em

To all the world no aristocracy.

Mos. What is the injury, lady?

LADY P. Why, the callet
You told me of, here I have ta'en dis-
guis'd.

Mos. Who? this! what means your
ladyship? The creature
I mention'd to you is apprehended now,
Before the senate; you shall see her—

LADY P. Where?
Mos. I'll bring you to her. This
young gentleman,

I saw him land this morning at the
port.

LADY P. Is't possible! how has my
judgment wander'd?

Sir, I must, blushing, say to you, I
have err'd;

¹⁴² disciple, discipline.

¹⁴³ The queen-apple is red within.

¹⁴⁴ The same.

And plead your pardon.

PER. What, more changes yet!

LADY P. I hope you ha' not the malice to remember

A gentlewoman's passion. If you stay In Venice here, please you to use me, sir——

MOS. Will you go, madam?

LADY P. Pray you, sir, use me; in faith,

The more you see me the more I shall conceive

You have forgot our quarrel.

[*Exeunt* LADY WOULD-BE, MOSCA, NANO, and WAITING-WOMEN.]

PER. This is rare!

Sir Politic Would-be? No, Sir Politic Bawd,

To bring me thus acquainted with his wife!

Well, wise Sir Pol, since you have practis'd thus

Upon my freshman-ship, I'll try your salt-head,

What proof it is against a counter-plot [*Exit.*]

SCENE IV.¹⁴⁵

[*Enter* VOLTORE, CORBACCIO, CORVINO, MOSCA.]

VOLT. Well, now you know the carriage of the business,

Your constancy is all that is requir'd Unto the safety of it.

Mos. Is the lie Safely convey'd ¹⁴⁶ amongst us? Is that sure?

Knows every man his burden?

CORV. Yes.

Mos. Then shrink not.

CORV. But knows the advocate the truth?

Mos. O, sir,

By no means; I devis'd a formal tale, That salv'd your reputation. But be valiant, sir.

CORV. I fear no one but him that this his pleading Should make him stand for a co-heir——

¹⁴⁵ The Scrutineo, or Senate House.

¹⁴⁶ arranged.

Mos. Co-halter!

Hang him; we will but use his tongue, his noise,

As we do croaker's ¹⁴⁷ here.

CORV. Ay, what shall he do?

Mos. When we ha' done, you mean?

CORV. Yes.

Mos. Why, we'll think;

Sell him for mummia ¹⁴⁸ he's half dust already.—

Do you not smile, [*to* VOLTORE] to see this buffalo, ¹⁴⁹

How he doth sport it with his head?

[*aside.*] I should,

If all were well and past.—Sir, [*to* CORBACCIO] only you

Are he that shall enjoy the crop of all, And these not know for whom they toil.

CORB. Ay, peace.

Mos. [*turning to* CORVINO.] But you shall eat it. [*aside.*] Much!—Worshipful sir, [*to* VOLTORE]

Mercury sit upon your thund'ring tongue,

Or the French Hercules, and make your language

As conquering as his club, to beat along, As with a tempest, flat, our adversaries; But much more yours, sir.

VOLT. Here they come, ha' done.

Mos. I have another witness, if you need, sir, I can produce.

VOLT. Who is it?

Mos. Sir, I have her.

SCENE V.¹⁵⁰

[*Enter four* AVOCATORI, and take their seats, BONARIO, CELIA, NOTARIO, COMMANDADORI, SAFFI, and other OFFICERS OF JUSTICE.]

1 Avoc. The like of this the senate never heard of.

2 Avoc. 'Twill come most strange to them when we report it.

4 Avoc. The gentlewoman has been ever held

Of unprovèd name.

¹⁴⁷ Corbaccio's.

¹⁴⁸ a medicine, supposed to be made of the oozing from mummies.

¹⁴⁹ horned animal—the usual joke on cuckolds.

¹⁵⁰ The same.

3 Avoc. So has the youth.

4 Avoc. The more unnatural part
that of his father.

2 Avoc. More of the husband.

1 Avoc. I not know to give

His act a name, it is so monstrous!

4 Avoc. But the impostor, he's a
thing created

T' exceed example!

1 Avoc. And all after-times!

2 Avoc. I never heard a true volup-
tuary

Describ'd but him.

3 Avoc. Appear yet those were cited?

Not. All but the old magnifico,
Volpone.

1 Avoc. Why is not he here?

Mos. Please your fatherhoods,

Here is his advocate: himself's so weak,
So feeble—

4 Avoc. Who are you?

Bon. His parasite,

His knave, his pander. I beseech the
court

He may be forc'd to come, that your
grave eyes

May bear strong witness of his strange
impostures.

VOLT. Upon my faith and credit
with your virtues,

He is not able to endure the air.

2 Avoc. Bring him.

3 Avoc. We will see him.

4 Avoc. Fetch him.

VOLT. Your fatherhoods' fit pleas-
ures be obey'd;

[*Exeunt OFFICERS.*]

But sure, the sight will rather move
your pities

Than indignation. May it please the
court,

In the mean time, he may be heard in
me.

I know this place most void of preju-
dice,

And therefore crave it, since we have
no reason

To fear our truth should hurt our cause.

3 Avoc. Speak free.

VOLT. Then know, most honour'd
fathers, I must now

Discover to your strangely abus'd ears,
The most prodigious and most frontless

piece

Of solid impudence, and treachery,
That ever vicious nature yet brought
forth

To shame the state of Venice. This
lewd woman,

That wants no artificial looks or tears

To help the vizor she has now put on,
Hath long been known a close adul-
teress

To that lascivious youth there; not
suspected,

I say, but known, and taken in the act
With him; and by this man, the easy
husband,

Pardon'd; whose timeless bounty makes
him now

Stand here, the most unhappy, inno-
cent person,

That ever man's own goodness made
accus'd.

For these not knowing how to owe a
gift

Of that dear grace, but with their
shame; being plac'd

So above all powers of their gratitude,
Began to hate the benefit; and in place

Of thanks, devise t' extirp the memory
Of such an act: wherein I pray your

fatherhoods

To observe the malice, yea, the rage of
creatures

Discover'd in their evils: and what
heart

Such take, ev'n from their crimes:—
but that anon

Will more appear.—This gentleman,
the father,

Hearing of this foul fact, with many
others,

Which daily struck at his too tender
ears,

And griev'd in nothing more than that
he could not

Preserve himself a parent (his son's ills
Growing to that strange flood), at last
decreed

To disinherit him.

1 Avoc. These be strange turns!

2 Avoc. The young man's fame was
ever fair and honest.

VOLT. So much more full of danger
is his vice,

That can beguile so, under shade of
virtue.

But, as I said, my honour'd sires, his
 father
 Having this settled purpose, by what
 means
 To him betray'd, we know not, and this
 day
 Appointed for the deed; that parricide.
 I cannot style him better, by confederacy
 Preparing this his paramour to be there.
 Ent'red Volpone's house (who was the
 man,
 Your fatherhoods must understand,
 design'd
 For the inheritance), there sought his
 father:—
 But with what purpose sought he him,
 my lords?
 I tremble to pronounce it, that a son
 Unto a father, and to such a father,
 Should have so foul, felonious intent!
 It was to murder him: when being prevented
 By his more happy absence, what then
 did he?
 Not check his wicked thoughts; no,
 now new deeds;
 (Mischief doth never end where it
 begins)
 An act of horror, fathers! He dragg'd
 forth
 The aged gentleman that had there lain
 bedrid
 Three years and more, out of his innocent
 couch,
 Naked upon the floor; there left him;
 wounded
 His servant in the face; and with this
 strumpet,
 The stale ¹⁵¹ to his forg'd practice, who
 was glad
 To be so active,—(I shall here desire
 Your fatherhoods to note but my collections,
 As most remarkable,—) thought at
 once to stop
 His father's ends, discredit his free
 choice
 In the old gentleman, redeem themselves,
 By laying infamy upon this man,
 To whom, with blushing, they should
 owe their lives.

¹⁵¹ stalking horse, mask to his false plot.

1 Avoc. What proofs have you of
 this?
 Bon. Most honour'd fathers,
 I humbly crave there be no credit given
 To this man's mercenary tongue.
 2 Avoc. Forbear.
 Bon. His soul moves in his fee.
 3 Avoc. O, sir.
 Bon. This fellow,
 For six sols ¹⁵² more would plead
 against his Maker.
 1 Avoc. You do forget yourself.
 Volt. Nay, nay, grave fathers,
 Let him have scope: can any man
 imagine
 That he will spare his accuser, that
 would not
 Have spar'd his parent?
 1 Avoc. Well, produce your proofs.
 Cel. I would I could forget I were
 a creature.
 Volt. Signior Corbaccio!
 [CORBACCIO comes forward.]
 4 Avoc. What is he?
 Volt. The father.
 2 Avoc. Has he had an oath?
 Not. Yes.
 Corb. What must I do now?
 Not. Your testimony's crav'd.
 Corb. Speak to the knave?
 I'll ha' my mouth first stopt with
 earth; my heart
 Abhors his knowledge: I disclaim in ¹⁵³
 him.
 1 Avoc. But for what cause?
 Corb. The mere portent of nature!
 He is an utter stranger to my loins.
 Bon. Have they made you to ¹⁵⁴
 this?
 Corb. I will not hear thee,
 Monster of men, swine, goat, wolf,
 parricide!
 Speak not, thou viper.
 Bon. Sir, I will sit down,
 And rather wish my innocence should
 suffer
 Than I resist the authority of a father.
 Volt. Signior Corvino!
 [CORVINO comes forward.]
 2 Avoc. This is strange.
 1 Avoc. Who's this?
 Not. The husband.

¹⁵³ A sol = about a franc. ¹⁵⁴ disown.
¹⁵⁴ prepared you to do.

4 Avoc. Is he sworn?
 Not. He is.
 3 Avoc. Speak then.
 CORV. This woman, please your
 fatherhoods, is a whore,
 Of most hot exercise, more than a par-
 tridge,
 Upon record——
 1 Avoc. No more.
 CORV. Neighs like a jennet.
 Not. Preserve the honour of the
 court.
 CORV. I shall,
 And modesty of your most reverend
 ears.
 And yet I hope that I may say, these
 eyes
 Have seen her glu'd unto that piece of
 cedar,
 That fine well timber'd gallant: and
 that here
 The letters may be read, thorough the
 horn,¹⁵⁵
 That make the story perfect.
 Mos. Excellent! sir.
 CORV. [*aside to MOSCA.*] There is no
 shame in this now, is there?
 Mos. None.
 CORV. Or if I said, I hop'd that she
 were onward
 To her damnation, if there be a hell
 Greater than whore and woman, a good
 Catholic
 May make the doubt.
 3 Avoc. His grief hath made him
 frantic.
 1 Avoc. Remove him hence.
 2 Avoc. Look to the woman.
 [*CELIA swoons.*]
 CORV. Rare!
 Prettily feign'd again!
 4 Avoc. Stand from about her.
 1 Avoc. Give her the air.
 3 Avoc. What can you say?
 [*To MOSCA.*]
 Mos. My wound,
 May it please your wisdoms, speaks
 for me, receiv'd
 In aid of my good patrons, when he
 mist
 His sought-for father, when that well-
 taught dame

¹⁵⁵ playing upon the horns of the cuckold
 and the horn-book.

Had her cue giv'n her to cry out, "A
 rape!"
 Bon. O most laid¹⁵⁶ impudence!
 Fathers—
 3 Avoc. Sir, be silent;
 You had your hearing free, so must
 they theirs.
 2 Avoc. I do begin to doubt th' im-
 posture here.
 4 Avoc. This woman has too many
 moods.
 Volt. Grave fathers,
 She is a creature of a most profest
 And prostituted lewdness.
 CORV. Most impetuous,
 Unsatisf'd, grave fathers!
 Volt. May her feignings
 Not take your wisdoms: but this day
 she baited
 A stranger, a grave knight, with her
 loose eyes,
 And more lascivious kisses. This man
 saw 'em
 Together on the water, in a gondola.
 Mos. Here is the lady herself, that
 saw them too,
 Without; who then had in the open
 streets
 Pursu'd them, but for saving her
 knight's honour.
 1 Avoc. Produce that lady.
 2 Avoc. Let her come.
 [*Exit MOSCA.*]
 4 Avoc. These things,
 They strike with wonder.
 3 Avoc. I am turn'd a stone.

SCENE VI.¹⁵⁷

[*To them re-enter MOSCA with
 LADY POLITIC WOULD-BE.*]
 Mos. Be resolute, madam.
 Lady P. Ay, this same is she.
 [*Pointing to CELIA.*]
 Out, thou chameleon harlot! now thine
 eyes
 Vie tears with the hyena. Dar'st thou
 look
 Upon my wrong'd face? I cry your
 pardons,
 I fear I have forgettingly transgress
 Against the dignity of the court——
¹⁵⁶ well-contriv'd. ¹⁵⁷ The same.

2 Avoc. No, madam.
 LADY P. And been exorbitant—
 2 Avoc. You have not, lady.
 4 Avoc. These proofs are strong.
 LADY P. Surely, I had no purpose
 To scandalize your honours, or my
 sex's.
 3 Avoc. We do believe it.
 LADY P. Surely you may believe it.
 2 Avoc. Madam, we do.
 LADY P. Indeed you may; my breed-
 ing
 Is not so coarse—
 4 Avoc. We know it.
 LADY P. To offend
 With pertinacy—
 3 Avoc. Lady—
 LADY P. Such a presence!
 No surely.
 1 Avoc. We will think it.
 LADY P. You may think it.
 1 Avoc. Let her o'ercome. What
 witnesses have you,
 To make good your report?
 BON. Our consciences.
 CEL. And heaven, that never fails
 the innocent.
 1 Avoc. These are no testimonies.
 BON. Not in your courts,
 Where multitude and clamour over-
 comes.
 1 Avoc. Nay, then you do wax inso-
 lent.
 [VOLPONE is brought in, as impotent.]
 VOLT. Here, here,
 The testimony comes that will con-
 vince,
 And put to utter dumbness their bold
 tongues!
 See here, grave fathers, here's the
 ravisher,
 The rider on men's wives, the great
 impostor,
 The grand voluptuary! Do you not
 think
 These limbs should affect venery? or
 these eyes
 Covet a concubine? Pray you mark
 these hands;
 Are they not fit to stroke a lady's
 breasts?
 Perhaps he doth dissemble!
 BON. So he does.

VOLT. Would you ha' him tortur'd?
 BON. I would have him prov'd.
 VOLT. Best try him then with goads,
 or burning irons;
 Put him to the strappado: I have heard
 The rack hath cur'd the gout; faith,
 give it him,
 And help him of a malady; be cour-
 teous.
 I'll undertake, before these honour'd
 fathers,
 He shall have yet as many left dis-
 eases,
 As she has known adulterers, or thou
 strumpets.
 O, my most equal hearers, if these
 deeds,
 Acts of this bold and most exorbitant
 strain,
 May pass with suff'rance, what one
 citizen
 But owes the forfeit of his life, yea,
 fame,
 To him that dares traduce him? Which
 of you
 Are safe, my honour'd fathers? I
 would ask,
 With leave of your grave fatherhoods,
 if their plot
 Have any face or colour like to
 truth?
 Or if, unto the dullest nostril here,
 It smell not rank, and most abhorrèd
 slander?
 I crave your care of this good gentle-
 man,
 Whose life is much endanger'd by their
 fable;
 And as for them, I will conclude with
 this,
 That vicious persons, when they're hot,
 and flesh'd
 In impious acts, their constancy¹⁵⁸
 abounds:
 Damn'd deeds are done with greatest
 confidence.
 1 Avoc. Take 'em to custody, and
 sever them.
 2 Avoc. 'Tis pity two such prodigies
 should live.
 1 Avoc. Let the old gentleman be
 return'd with care.
 [Exeunt OFFICERS with VOLPONE.]
¹⁵⁸ boldness.

I'm sorry our credulity wrong'd him.

4 Avoc. These are two creatures!

3 Avoc. I've an earthquake in me.

2 Avoc. Their shame, ev'n in their cradles, fled their faces.

4 Avoc. You have done a worthy service to the state, sir,

In their discovery. [To VOLTORE.]

1 Avoc. You shall hear, ere night, What punishment the court decrees upon 'em.

[*Exeunt* AVOCATORI, NOTARIO, and OFFICERS with BONARIO and CELIA.]

VOLT. We thank your fatherhoods. How like you it?

Mos. Rare.

I'd ha' your tongue, sir, tipt with gold for this;

I'd ha' you be the heir to the whole city;

The earth I'd have want men ere you want living:

They're bound to erect your statue in St. Mark's.

Signior Corvino, I would have you go And show yourself that you have conquer'd.

CORV. Yes.

Mos. It was much better that you should profess

Yourself a cuckold thus, than that the other

Should have been prov'd.

CORV. Nay, I consider'd that: Now it is her fault.

Mos. Then it had been yours.

CORV. True; I do doubt this advocate still.

Mos. I' faith.

You need not, I dare ease you of that care.

CORV. I trust thee, Mosca. [*Exit.*]

Mos. As your own soul, sir.

CORV. Mosca!

Mos. Now for your business, sir.

CORV. How! ha' you business?

Mos. Yes, yours, sir.

CORV. O, none else?

Mos. None else, not I.

CORV. Be careful then.

Mos. Rest you with both your eyes, sir.

CORV. Dispatch it.

Mos. Instantly.

CORV. And look that all, Whatever, be put in, jewels, plate, moneys,

Household stuff, bedding, curtains.

Mos. Curtain-rings, sir; Only the advocate's fee must be deducted.

CORV. I'll pay him now; you'll be too prodigal.

Mos. Sir, I must tender it.

CORV. Two chequins is well.

Mos. No, six, sir.

CORV. 'Tis too much.

Mos. He talk'd a great while; You must consider that, sir.

CORV. Well, there's three—

Mos. I'll give it him.

CORV. Do so, and there's for thee. [*Exit.*]

Mos. [*aside.*] Bountiful bones! What horrid strange offence

Did he commit 'gainst nature, in his youth,

Worthy this age?—You see, sir, how I work [*to* VOLTORE]

Unto your ends; take you no notice.

VOLT. No,

I'll leave you.

Mos. All is yours, the devil and all, Good advocate!—Madam, I'll bring you home.

LADY P. No, I'll go see your patron.

Mos. That you shall not: I'll tell you why. My purpose is to urge

My patron to reform his will, and for The zeal you've shown to-day, whereas before

You were but third or fourth, you shall be now

Put in the first; which would appear as begg'd

If you were present. Therefore—

LADY P. You shall sway me. [*Exeunt.*]

ACT V

SCENE I.¹⁰⁰

[*Enter* VOLPONE.]

VOLP. Well, I am here, and all this brunt is past.

I ne'er was in dislike with my disguise

¹⁰⁰ A room in Volpone's house.

Till this fled moment: here 'twas good,
 in private;
 But in your public,—*cave* whilst I
 breathe.
 'Fore God, my left leg 'gan to have
 the cramp,
 And I apprehended straight some power
 had struck me
 With a dead palsy. Well! I must be
 merry,
 And shake it off. A many of these
 fears
 Would put me into some villanous dis-
 ease,
 Should they come thick upon me: I'll
 prevent 'em.
 Give me a bowl of lusty wine, to fright
 This humour from my heart. [*drinks.*]
 Hum, hum, hum!
 'Tis almost gone already; I shall con-
 quer
 Any device now of rare ingenious
 knavery,
 That would possess me with a violent
 laughter,
 Would make me up again. [*drinks*
again.] So, so, so, so!
 This heat is life; 'tis blood by this
 time:—Mosca!

SCENE II.¹⁰⁰[VOLPONE. *Enter* MOSCA.]

Mos. How now, sir? Does the day
 look clear again?
 Are we recover'd, and wrought out of
 error,
 Into our way, to see our path before
 us?

Is our trade free once more?

VOLP. Exquisite Mosca!

Mos. Was it not carri'd learnedly?

VOLP. And stoutly:
 Good wits are greatest in extremi-
 ties.

Mos. It were folly beyond thought
 to trust

Any grand act unto a cowardly spirit.
 You are not taken with it enough, me-
 thinks.

VOLP. O, more than if I had enjoy'd
 the wench:

¹⁰⁰ The same.

The pleasure of all woman-kind's not
 like it.

Mos. Why, now you speak, sir. We
 must here be fix'd;

Here we must rest; this is our master-
 piece;

We cannot think to go beyond this.

VOLP. True,

Thou hast play'd thy prize, my precious
 Mosca.

Mos. Nay, sir,

To gull the court——

VOLP. And quite divert the torrent
 Upon the innocent.

Mos. Yes, and to make

So rare a music out of discords——

VOLP. Right.

That yet to me's the strangest, how
 thou'st borne it!

That these, being so divided 'mongst
 themselves,

Should not scent somewhat, or in me
 or thee,

Or doubt their own side.

Mos. True, they will not see 't.

Too much light blinds 'em, I think.
 Each of 'em

Is so possess'd and stuff'd with his own
 hopes

That anything unto the contrary,
 Never so true, or never so apparent,
 Never so palpable, they will resist
 it——

VOLP. Like a temptation of the
 devil.

Mos. Right, sir.

Merchants may talk of trade, and your
 great signiors

Of land that yields well; but if Italy
 Have any glebe more fruitful than
 these fellows,

I am deceiv'd. Did not your advocate
 rare?

VOLP. O—"My most honour'd
 fathers, my grave fathers,
 Under correction of your fatherhoods,
 What face of truth is here? If these
 strange deeds

May pass, most honour'd fathers"—I
 had much ado
 To forbear laughing.

Mos. It seem'd to me, you sweat,
 sir.

VOLP. In troth, I did a little.

Mos. But confess, sir,
Were you not daunted?

VOLP. In good faith, I was
A little in a mist, but not dejected;
Never but still myself.

Mos. I think it, sir.
Now, so truth help me, I must needs
say this, sir,

And out of conscience for your advocate,

He has taken pains, in faith, sir, and
deserv'd,

In my poor judgment, I speak it under
favour,

Not to contrary you, sir, very richly—
Well—to be cozen'd.

VOLP. Troth, and I think so too,
By that I heard him in the latter
end.

Mos. O, but before, sir: had you
heard him first

Draw it to certain heads, then aggravate,

Then use his vehement figures—I
look'd still

When he would shift a shirt; and doing
this

Out of pure love, no hope of gain—

VOLP. 'Tis right.
I cannot answer him, Mosca, as I
would,

Not yet; but for thy sake, at thy entreaty,

I will begin, even now—to vex 'em all,
This very instant.

Mos. Good sir.
VOLP. Call the dwarf

And eunuch forth.

Mos. Castrone, Nانو!

[Enter CASTRONE and NANO.]

NANO. Here.

VOLP. Shall we have a jig now?

Mos. What you please, sir.

VOLP. Go,

Straight give out about the streets, you
two,

That I am dead; do it with constancy,
Sadly,¹⁶¹ do you hear? Impute it to
the grief

Of this late slander.

[Exeunt CASTRONE and NANO.]

Mos. What do you mean, sir?

¹⁶¹ seriously.

VOLP. O,
I shall have instantly my Vulture,
Crow,
Raven, come flying hither, on the
news,

To peck for carrion, my she-wolf, and
all,

Greedy, and full of expectation—

Mos. And then to have it ravish'd
from their mouths!

VOLP. 'Tis true. I will ha' thee put
on a gown,

And take upon thee, as thou wert mine
heir;

Show 'em a will. Open that chest, and
reach

Forth one of those that has the blanks;
I'll straight

Put in thy name.

Mos. It will be rare, sir.
[Gives him a paper.]

VOLP. Ay,
When they e'en gape, and find them-
selves deluded—

Mos. Yes.

VOLP. And thou use them scurvily!
Dispatch,

Get on thy gown.

Mos. [putting on a gown.] But what,
sir, if they ask

After the body?

VOLP. Say, it was corrupted.

Mos. I'll say it stunk, sir; and was
fain to have it

Coffin'd up instantly, and sent away.

VOLP. Anything; what thou wilt.
Hold, here's my will.

Get thee a cap, a count-book, pen and
ink,

Papers afore thee; sit as thou wert
taking

An inventory of parcels. I'll get up
Behind the curtain, on a stool, and

hearken:

Sometime peep over, see how they do
look,

With what degrees their blood doth
leave their faces.

O, 'twill afford me a rare meal of
laughter!

Mos. [putting on a cap, and setting
out the table, etc.] Your advocate

will turn stark dull upon
it.

VOLP. It will take off his oratory's edge.
 Mos. But your clarissimo, old roundback, he
 Will crump you like a hog-louse, with the touch.
 VOLP. And what Corvino?
 Mos. O, sir, look for him, To-morrow morning, with a rope and dagger,
 To visit all the streets; he must run mad,
 My lady too, that came into the court,
 To bear false witness for your worship—
 VOLP. Yes,
 And kiss'd me 'fore the fathers, when my face
 Flow'd all with oils—
 Mos. And sweat, sir. Why, your gold
 Is such another med'cine, it dries up
 All those offensive savours: it transforms
 The most deformèd, and restores them lovely,
 As 'twere the strange poetical girdle.¹⁶²
 Jove
 Could not invent t' himself a shroud more subtle
 To pass Acrisius' ¹⁶³ guards. It is the thing
 Makes all the world her grace, her youth, her beauty.
 VOLP. I think she loves me.
 Mos. Who? The lady, sir? She's jealous of you.
 VOLP. Dost thou say so?
 [Knocking within.]
 Mos. Hark.
 There's some already.
 VOLP. Look.
 Mos. It is the Vulture;
 He has the quickest scent.
 VOLP. I'll to my place,
 Thou to thy posture.
 [Goes behind the curtain.]
 Mos. I am set.
 VOLP. But, Mosca,
 Play the artificer now, torture 'em rarely.

¹⁶² Cestus (Jonson.)¹⁶³ the father of Danaë.SCENE III.¹⁶⁴

[Mosca. Enter VOLTRE.]
 VOLT. How now, my Mosca?
 Mos. [writing.] "Turkey carpets, nine—"
 VOLT. Taking an inventory! that is well.
 Mos. "Two suits of bedding, tissue—"
 VOLT. Where's the will?
 Let me read that the while.
 [Enter SERVANTS with CORBACCIO in a chair.]
 CORB. So, set me down.
 And get you home.
 [Exeunt SERVANTS.]
 VOLT. Is he come now, to trouble us?
 Mos. "Of cloth of gold, two more—"
 CORB. Is it done, Mosca?
 Mos. "Of several velvets, eight—"
 VOLT. I like his care.
 CORB. Dost thou not hear?
 [Enter CORVINO.]
 CORV. Ha! is the hour come, Mosca?
 VOLT. Ay, now they muster.
 [Peeps from behind a traverse.]
 CORV. What does the advocate here, Or this Corbaccio?
 CORB. What do these here?
 [Enter LADY POL. WOULD-BE.]
 LADY P. Mosca!
 Is his thread spun?
 Mos. "Eight chests of linen—"
 VOLP. O,
 My fine Dame Would-be, too!
 CORV. Mosca, the will,
 That I may show it these, and rid 'em hence.
 Mos. "Six chests of diaper, four of damask."—There.
 [Gives them the will carelessly, over his shoulder.]
 CORB. Is that the will?
 Mos. "Down-beds, and bolsters—"
 VOLP. Rare!
 Be busy still. Now they begin to flutter:

¹⁶⁴ The same.

They never think of me. Look, see,
see, see!
How their swift eyes run over the long
deed,

Unto the name, and to the legacies,
What is bequeath'd them there——

MOS. "Ten suits of hangings——"

VOLP. Ay, in their garters, Mosca.

Now their hopes

Are at the gasp.

VOLT. Mosca the heir.

CORB. What's that?

VOLP. My advocate is dumb; look
to my merchant,

He's heard of some strange storm, a
ship is lost,

He faints; my lady will swoon. Old
glazen-eyes,

He hath not reach'd his despair
yet.

CORB. All these

Are out of hope; I am, sure, the man.

[Takes the will.]

CORV. But, Mosca——

MOS. "Two cabinets——"

CORV. Is this in earnest?

MOS. "One

Of ebony——"

CORV. Or do you but delude me?

MOS. "The other, mother of pearl."

—I'm very busy.

Good faith, it is a fortune thrown upon
me——

"Item, one salt of agate"—not my seek-
ing.

LADY P. Do you hear, sir?

MOS. "A perfum'd box"—Pray you
forbear,

You see I'm troubl'd—"made of an
onyx——"

LADY P. How!

MOS. To-morrow or next day, I shall
be at leisure

To talk with you all.

CORV. Is this my large hope's issue?

LADY P. Sir, I must have a fairer
answer.

MOS. Madam!

Marry, and shall: pray you, fairly quit
my house.

Nay, raise no tempest with your looks;
but hark you,

Remember what your ladyship off'red
me

To put you in an heir; go to, think
on it:

And what you said e'en your best
madams did

For maintenance; and why not you?
Enough.

Go home, and use the poor Sir Pol,
your knight, well,

For fear I tell some riddles; go, be
melancholic.

[Exit LADY WOULD-BE.]

VOLP. O, my fine devil!

CORV. Mosca, pray you a word.

MOS. Lord! will not you take your
dispatch hence yet?

Methinks, of all, you should have been
th' example.

Why should you stay here? With what
thought, what promise?

Hear you; do you not know, I know
you an ass,

And that you would most fain have
been a wittol

If fortune would have let you? that
you are

A declar'd cuckold, on good terms?
This pearl,

You'll say, was yours? right: this dia-
mond?

I'll not deny't, but thank you. Much
here else?

It may be so. Why, think that these
good works

May help to hide your bad. I'll not
betray you;

Although you be but extraordinary,
And have it only in title, it sufficeth:

Go home, be melancholy too, or mad.

[Exit CORVINO.]

VOLP. Rare Mosca! how his villany
becomes him!

VOLT. Certain he doth delude all
these for me.

CORB. Mosca the heir!

VOLP. O, his four eyes have found
it.

CORB. I am cozen'd, cheated, by a
parasite-slave;

Harlot,¹⁰⁵ th' hast gull'd me.

MOS. Yes, sir. Stop your mouth,
Or I shall draw the only tooth is left.
Are not you he, that filthy covetous
wretch,

¹⁰⁵ fellow: formerly used of both sexes.

With the three legs, that here, in hope
 of prey,
 Have, any time this three years,
 snuff'd about,
 With your most grov'ling nose, and
 would have hir'd
 Me to the pois'ning of my patron,
 sir?
 Are not you he that have to-day in
 court
 Profess'd the disinheriting of your son?
 Perjur'd yourself? Go home, and die,
 and stink;
 If you but croak a syllable, all comes
 out:
 Away, and call your porters!

[Exit CORBACCIO.]

Go, go, stink.

VOLP. Excellent varlet!

VOLT. Now, my faithful Mosca,
 I find thy constancy—

Mos. Sir!

VOLT. Sincere.

Mos. [writing.] "A table
 Of porphyry"—I marle¹⁶⁶ you'll be
 thus troublesome.

VOLT. Nay, leave off now, they are
 gone.

Mos. Why, who are you?
 What! who did send for you? O, cry
 you mercy,
 Reverend sir! Good faith, I am griev'd
 for you,
 That any chance of mine should thus
 defeat
 Your (I must needs say) most deserv-
 ing travails:
 But I protest, sir, it was cast upon
 me,
 And I could almost wish to be with-
 out it,
 But that the will o' the dead must be
 observ'd.
 Marry, my joy is that you need it
 not;
 You have a gift, sir (thank your edu-
 cation),
 Will never let you want, while there
 are men,
 And malice, to breed causes.¹⁶⁷ Would
 I had
 But half the like, for all my fortune,
 sir!

¹⁶⁶ marvel.

¹⁶⁷ law-suits.

If I have any suits, as I do hope,
 Things being so easy and direct, I shall
 not,
 I will make bold with your obstreper-
 ous aid,
 Conceive me—for your fee, sir. In
 mean time,
 You that have so much law, I know ha'
 the conscience
 Not to be covetous of what is mine.
 Good sir, I thank you for my plate;
 'twill help
 To set up a young man. Good faith,
 you look
 As you were costive; best go home and
 purge, sir. [Exit VOLTORE.]
 VOLP. [comes from behind the cur-
 tain.] Bid him eat lettuce¹⁶⁸
 well. My witty mischief,
 Let me embrace thee. O, that I could
 now
 Transform thee to a Venus!—Mosca,
 go,
 Straight take my habit of clarissimo,
 And walk the streets; be seen, torment
 'em more:
 We must pursue, as well as plot. Who
 would
 Have lost this feast?
 Mos. I doubt it will lose them.
 VOLP. O, my recovery shall recover
 all.
 That I could now but think on some
 disguise
 To meet 'em in, and ask 'em ques-
 tions:
 How I would vex 'em still at every
 turn!
 Mos. Sir, I can fit you.
 VOLP. Canst thou?
 Mos. Yes, I know
 One o' the commandadori, sir, so like
 you;
 Him will I straight make drunk, and
 bring you his habit.
 VOLP. A rare disguise, and answer-
 ing thy brain!
 O, I will be a sharp disease unto 'em.
 Mos. Sir, you must look for
 curses—
 VOLP. Till they burst;
 The Fox fares ever best when he is
 curst. [Exeunt.]

¹⁶⁸ to make him sleep.

SCENE IV.¹⁶⁹

[Enter PEREGRINE, disguised, and three MERCATORI.]

PER. Am I enough disguis'd?

1 MER. I warrant you.

PER. All my ambition is to fright him only.

2 MER. If you could ship him away, 'twere excellent.

3 MER. To Zant, or to Aleppo!

PER. Yes, and ha' his

Adventures put i' th' Book of Voyages, And his gull'd story regist'ed for truth.

Well, gentlemen, when I am in a while,

And that you think us warm in our discourse,

Know your approaches.

1 MER. Trust it to our care.

[Exeunt MERCHANTS.]

[Enter WAITING-WOMAN.]

PER. Save you, fair lady! Is Sir Pol within?

WOM. I do not know, sir.

PER. Pray you say unto him Here is a merchant, upon earnest business.

Desires to speak with him.

WOM. I will see, sir. [Exit.]

PER. Pray you.

I see the family is all female here.

[Re-enter WAITING-WOMAN.]

WOM. He says, sir, he has weighty affairs of state,

That now require him whole; some other time

You may possess him.

PER. Pray you say again,

If those require him whole, these will exact him,

Whereof I bring him tidings.

[Exit WOMAN.]

What might be

His grave affair of state now! How to make

Bolognian sausages here in Venice, sparing

One o' th' ingredients?

¹⁶⁹ A hall in Sir Politic's house.

[Re-enter WAITING-WOMAN.]

WOM. Sir, he says, he knows By your word "tidings," that you are no statesman,

And therefore wills you stay.

PER. Sweet, pray you return him; I have not read so many proclamations, And studied them for words, as he has done—

But—here he deigns to come.

[Exit WOMAN.]

[Enter SIR POLITIC.]

SIR P. Sir, I must crave Your courteous pardon. There hath chanc'd to-day

Unkind disaster 'twixt my lady and me;

And I was penning my apology, To give her satisfaction, as you came now.

PER. Sir, I am griev'd I bring you worse disaster:

The gentleman you met at th' port to-day,

That told you he was newly arriv'd—

SIR P. Ay, was A fugitive punk?

PER. No, sir, a spy set on you: And he has made relation to the senate, That you profest to him to have a plot To sell the State of Venice to the Turk.

SIR P. O me!

PER. For which warrants are sign'd by this time,

To apprehend you; and to search your study

For papers—

SIR P. Alas, sir, I have none, but notes

Drawn out of play-books—

PER. All the better, sir.

SIR P. And some essays. What shall I do?

PER. Sir, best

Convey yourself into a sugar-chest; Or, if you could lie round, a frail¹⁷⁰ were rare;

And I could send you aboard.

SIR P. Sir, I but talk'd so, For discourse sake merely.

[They knock without.]

¹⁷⁰ rush-basket.

PER. Hark! they are there.
 SIR P. I am a wretch, a wretch!
 PER. What will you do, sir?
 Have you ne'er a currant-butt to leap into?

They'll put you to the rack; you must be sudden.

SIR P. Sir, I have an engine ¹⁷¹ —

3 MER. [*within.*] Sir Politic Would-be!

2 MER. [*within.*] Where is he?

SIR P. That I've thought upon before time.

PER. What is it?

SIR P. I shall ne'er endure the torture.

Marry, it is, sir, of a tortoise-shell, fitted for these extremities: pray you, sir, help me.

Here I've a place, sir, to put back my legs,

Please you to lay it on, sir, [*lies down while PEREGRINE places the shell upon him*]—with this cap,

And my black gloves. I'll lie, sir, like a tortoise,

Till they are gone.

PER. And call you this an engine?

SIR P. Mine own device.—Good sir, bid my wife's women

To burn my papers. [*Exit PEREGRINE.*]

[*The three MERCHANTS rush in.*]

1 MER. Where is he hid?

3 MER. We must,

And will sure find him.

2 MER. Which is his study?

[*Re-enter PEREGRINE.*]

1 MER. What

Are you, sir?

PER. I'm a merchant, that came here

To look upon this tortoise?

3 MER. How!

1 MER. St. Mark!

What beast is this?

PER. It is a fish.

2 MER. Come out here!

PER. Nay, you may strike him, sir, and tread upon him;

He'll bear a cart.

1 MER. What, to run over him?

¹⁷² contrivance.

PER. Yes, sir.

3 MER. Let's jump upon him.

2 MER. Can he not go?

PER. He creeps, sir.

1 MER. Let's see him creep.

PER. No, good sir, you will hurt him.

2 MER. Heart, I will see him creep, or prick his guts.

3 MER. Come out here!

PER. Pray you, sir, creep a little.

1 MER. Forth.

2 MER. Yet further.

PER. Good sir!—Creep.

2 MER. We'll see his legs.

[*They pull off the shell and discover him.*]

3 MER. Gods so, he has garters!

1 MER. Ay, and gloves!

2 MER. Is this

Your fearful tortoise?

PER. [*discovering himself.*] Now, Sir Pol, we're even;

For your next project I shall be prepar'd:

I am sorry for the funeral of your notes, sir.

1 MER. 'Twere a rare motion ¹⁷² to be seen in Fleet-street.

2 MER. Ay, in the Term.

1 MER. Or Smithfield, in the fair.

3 MER. Methinks 'tis but a melancholic sight.

PER. Farewell, most politic tortoise! [*Exeunt PEREGRINE and MERCHANTS.*]

[*Re-enter WAITING-WOMAN.*]

SIR P. Where's my lady? Knows she of this?

WOM. I know not, sir.

SIR P. Enquire.—

O, I shall be the fable of all feasts, The freight of the gazetti,¹⁷³ ship-boys' tale;

And, which is worst, even talk for ordinaries.

WOM. My lady's come most melancholic home,

And says, sir, she will straight to sea, for physic.

SIR P. And I, to shun this place and clime for ever,

¹⁷² show. ¹⁷³ the theme of the newspapers.

Creeping with house on back, and think
it well
To shrink my poor head in my politic
shell. [Exeunt.]

SCENE V.¹⁷⁴

[Enter MOSCA in the habit of a
clarissimo, and VOLPONE in that
of a commandadore.]

VOLP. Am I then like him?

Mos. O, sir, you are he;
No man can sever you.

VOLP. Good.

Mos. But what am I?

VOLP. 'Fore heaven, a brave claris-
simo; thou becom'st it!

Pity thou wert not born one.

Mos. [aside.] If I hold
My made one, 'twill be well.

VOLP. I'll go and see
What news first at the court. [Exit.]

Mos. Do so. My Fox
Is out of his hole, and ere he shall re-
enter,

I'll make him languish in his borrow'd
case,¹⁷⁵

Except he come to composition with
me.—

Androgyno, Castrone, Nano!

[Enter ANDROGYNO, CASTRONE, and
NANO.]

ALL. Here.

Mos. Go, recreate yourselves
abroad; go, sport.— [Exeunt.]

So, now I have the keys, and am
possest.

Since he will needs be dead afore his
time,

I'll bury him, or gain by 'm: I'm his
heir,

And so will keep me, till he share at
least.

To cozen him of all, were but a
cheat

Well plac'd; no man would construe it
a sin:

Let his sport pay for 't. This is call'd
the Foxtrap. [Exit.]

SCENE VI.¹⁷⁶

[Enter CORBACCIO, CORVINO.]

CORB. They say the court is set.

CORV. We must maintain
Our first tale good, for both our repu-
tations.

CORB. Why, mine's no tale: my son
would there have kill'd me.

CORV. That's true, I had forgot:—
mine is, I'm sure.

But for your will, sir.

CORB. Ay, I'll come upon him
For that hereafter, now his patron's
dead.

[Enter VOLPONE.]

VOLP. Signior Corvino! and Cor-
baccio! sir,

Much joy unto you.

CORV. Of what?

VOLP. The sudden good

Dropt down upon you—

CORB. Where?

VOLP. And none knows how,
From old Volpone, sir.

CORB. Out, arrant knave!

VOLP. Let not your too much
wealth, sir, make you furious.

CORB. Away, thou varlet.

VOLP. Why, sir?

CORB. Dost thou mock me?

VOLP. You mock the world, sir; did
you not change wills?

CORB. Out, harlot!

VOLP. O! belike you are the man,
Signior Corvino? Faith, you carry it
well;

You grow not mad withal; I love your
spirit:

You are not over-leaven'd with your
fortune.

You should ha' some would swell now,
like a wine-fat,

With such an autumn.—Did he gi' you
all, sir?

CORB. Avoid, you rascal!

VOLP. Troth, your wife has shown
Herself a very woman; but you are
well,

You need not care, you have a good
estate,

¹⁷⁴ A room in Volpone's house.

¹⁷⁵ disguise.

¹⁷⁶ A street.

To bear it out, sir, better by this chance:

Except Corbaccio have a share.

CORB. Hence, varlet.

VOLP. You will not be acknown, sir; why, 'tis wise.

Thus do all gamesters, at all games, dissemble:

No man will seem to win.

[*Exeunt* CORVINO
and CORBACCIO.]

Here comes my vulture,
Heaving his beak up i' the air, and snuffing.

SCENE VII.¹⁷⁷

[VOLPONE. *Enter* VOLTORE.]

VOLT. Outstript thus, by a parasite!
a slave,

Would run on errands, and make legs for crumbs!

Well, what I'll do——

VOLP. The court stays for your worship.

I e'en rejoice, sir, at your worship's happiness,

And that it fell into so learned hands,

That understand the fing'ring——

VOLT. What do you mean?

VOLP. I mean to be a suitor to your worship.

For the small tenement, out of reparations,¹⁷⁸

That, at the end of your long row of houses,

By the Piscaria: it was, in Volpone's time,

Your predecessor, ere he grew diseas'd,

A handsome, pretty, custom'd¹⁷⁹ bawdy-house

As any was in Venice, none disprais'd;

But fell with him: his body and that house

Decay'd together.

VOLT. Come, sir, leave your prating.

VOLP. Why, if your worship give me but your hand

That I may ha' the refusal, I have done.

'Tis a mere toy to you, sir; candle-rents;

¹⁷⁷ The same. ¹⁷⁸ out of repair.
¹⁷⁹ well-frequented.

As your learn'd worship knows——

VOLT. What do I know?

VOLP. Marry, no end of your wealth, sir; God decrease it!

VOLT. Mistaking knave! what, mock'st thou my misfortune?

[*Exit.*]

VOLP. His blessing on your heart, sir; would 'twere more!——

Now to my first again, at the next corner. [*Exit.*]

SCENE VIII.¹⁸⁰

[*Enter* CORBACCIO and CORVINO
(*MOSCA* *passant*).]

CORB. See, in our habit!¹⁸¹ see the impudent varlet!

CORV. That I could shoot mine eyes at him, like gun-stones!

[*Enter* VOLPONE.]

VOLP. But is this true, sir, of the parasite?

CORB. Again, t' afflict us! monster!

VOLP. In good faith, sir, I'm heartily griev'd, a beard of your grave length

Should be so over-reach'd. I never brook'd

That parasite's hair; methought his nosé should cozen:¹⁸²

There still was somewhat in his look, did promise

The bane of a clarissimo.

CORB. Knave——

VOLP. Methinks

Yet you, that are so traded i' the world, A witty merchant, the fine bird, Corvino,

That have such moral emblems on your name,

Should not have sung your shame, and dropt your cheese,

To let the Fox laugh at your emptiness.

CORV. Sirrah, you think the privilege of the place,

And your red saucy cap, that seems to me

Nail'd to your jolt-head with those two chequins,

¹⁸⁰ The Scrutineo, or Senate House.

¹⁸¹ dressed like a clarissimo, or gentleman.

¹⁸² swindle.

Can warrant your abuses; come you hither:

You shall perceive, sir, I dare beat you; approach.

VOLP. No haste, sir, I do know your valour well,

Since you durst publish what you are, sir.

CORV. Tarry, I'd speak with you.

VOLP. Sir, sir, another time——

CORV. Nay, now.

VOLP. O lord, sir! I were a wise man, Would stand the fury of a distracted cuckold.

[*Mosca walks by them.*]

CORV. What, come again!

VOLP. Upon 'em, Mosca; save me.

CORV. The air 's infected where he breathes.

CORV. Let's fly him.

[*Exeunt CORVINO and CORBACCIO.*]

VOLP. Excellent basilisk! turn upon the vulture.

SCENE IX.¹⁸³

[*MOSCA, VOLPONE. Enter VOLTORE.*]

VOLT. Well, flesh-fly, it is summer with you now;

Your winter will come on.

Mos. Good advocate, Prithee not rail, nor threaten out of place thus;

Thou'lt make a solecism, as madam says.

Get you a biggin¹⁸⁴ more; your brain breaks loose. [*Exit.*]

VOLT. Well, sir.

VOLP. Would you ha' me beat the insolent slave,

Throw dirt upon his first good clothes?

VOLT. This same

Is doubtless some familiar.

VOLP. Sir, the court,

In troth, stays for you. I am mad, a mule

That never read Justinian, should get up,

And ride an advocate. Had you no quirk

¹⁸³ The same.

¹⁸⁴ barrister's cap.

To avoid gullage, sir, by such a creature?

I hope you do but jest; he has not done 't:

This 's but confederacy to blind the rest.

You are the heir?

VOLT. A strange, officious, Troublesome knave! thou dost torment me.

VOLP. I know——

It cannot be, sir, that you should be cozen'd;

'Tis not within the wit of man to do it;

You are so wise, so prudent; and 'tis fit

That wealth and wisdom still should go together. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE X.¹⁸⁵

[*Enter four AVOCATORI, NOTARIO, BONARIO, CELIA, CORBACCIO, CORVINO, COMMANDADORI, SAFFI, etc.*]

1 Avoc. Are all the parties here?

Not. All but th' advocate.

2 Avoc. And here he comes.

[*Enter VOLTORE and VOLPONE.*]

1 Avoc. Then bring them forth to sentence.

VOLT. O, my most honour'd fathers, let your mercy

Once win upon your justice, to forgive—

I am distracted——

VOLP. [*aside.*] What will he do now?

VOLT. O,

I know not which t' address myself to first;

Whether your fatherhoods, or these innocents——

CORV. [*aside.*] Will he betray himself?

VOLT. Whom equally

I have abus'd, out of most covetous ends——

CORV. The man is mad!

CORV. What's that?

CORV. He is possess.

¹⁸⁵ The same.

VOLT. For which, now struck in conscience, here I prostrate
Myself at your offended feet, for pardon.

1, 2 Avoc. Arise.

CEL. O heaven, how just thou art!

VOLP. I'm caught

I' mine own noose——

CORV. [to CORBACCIO.] Be constant,
sir; nought now

Can help but impudence.

1 Avoc. Speak forward.

COM. Silence!

VOLT. It is not passion in me, reverend fathers,

But only conscience, conscience, my good sires,

That makes me now tell truth. That parasite,

That knave, hath been the instrument of all.

1 Avoc. Where is that knave? Fetch him.

VOLP. I go. [Exit.]

CORV. Grave fathers,

This man 's distracted; he confest it now:

For, hoping to be old Volpone's heir,
Who now is dead——

3 Avoc. How!

2 Avoc. Is Volpone dead?

CORV. Dead since, grave fathers.

BON. O sure vengeance!

1 Avoc. Stay,

Then he was no deceiver?

VOLT. O no, none:

This parasite, grave fathers.

CORV. He does speak

Out of mere envy, 'cause the servant 's made

The thing he gap'd for. Please your fatherhoods,

This is the truth, though I'll not justify

The other, but he may be some-deal faulty.

VOLT. Ay, to your hopes, as well as mine, Corvino:

But I'll use modesty.¹⁸⁶ Pleaseth your wisdoms,

To view these certain notes, and but confer¹⁸⁷ them;

And as I hope favour, they shall speak clear truth.

CORV. The devil has ent'red him!

BON. Or bides in you.

4 Avoc. We have done ill, by a public officer

To send for him, if he be heir.

2 Avoc. For whom?

4 Avoc. Him that they call the parasite.

3 Avoc. 'Tis true,

He is a man of great estate, now left.

4 Avoc. Go you, and learn his name, and say the court

Entreats his presence here, but to the clearing

Of some few doubts. [Exit NOTARY.]

2 Avoc. This same 's a labyrinth!

1 Avoc. Stand you unto your first report?

CORV. My state,

My life, my fame——
BON. Where is't?

CORV. Are at the stake.

1 Avoc. Is yours so too?

CORV. The advocate's a knave,
And has a forked tongue——

2 Avoc. Speak to the point.

CORV. So is the parasite too.

1 Avoc. This is confusion.

VOLT. I do beseech your fatherhoods, read but those——

[Giving them papers.]

CORV. And credit nothing the false spirit hath writ:

It cannot be but he's possest, grave fathers.

SCENE XI.¹⁸⁸

[Enter VOLPONE.]

VOLP. To make a snare for mine own neck! and run

My head into it, wilfully! with laughter!

When I had newly scap'd, was free and clear,

Out of mere wantonness! O, the dull devil

Was in this brain of mine when I devis'd it,

And Mosca gave it second; he must now

Help to sear up this vein, or we bleed dead.

¹⁸⁸ A street.

¹⁸⁶ moderation.

¹⁸⁷ compare.

[Enter NANO, ANDROGYNO, and CASTRONE.]

How now! Who let you loose?
Whither go you now?

What, to buy gingerbread, or to drown
kitlings?

NAN. Sir, Master Mosca call'd us
out of doors,

And bid us all go play, and took the
keys.

AND. Yes.

VOLP. Did Master Mosca take
the keys? Why, so!

I'm farther in. These are my fine con-
ceits!

I must be merry, with a mischief to
me!

What a vile wretch was I, that could
not bear

My fortune soberly? I must ha' my
crochets,

And my conundrums! Well, go you,
and seek him;

His meaning may be truer than my
fear.

Bid him, he straight come to me to the
court;

Thither will I, and, if 't be possible,
Unscrew my advocate, upon new
hopes:

When I provok'd him, then I lost my-
self. [Exeunt.]

SCENE XII.¹⁶⁰

[AVOCATORI, BONARIO, CELIA, COR-
BACCIO, CORVINO, COMMANDA-
DORI, SAFFI, etc., as before.]

1 Avoc. These things can ne'er be
reconcil'd. He here [showing
the papers]

Professeth that the gentleman was
wrong'd,

And that the gentlewoman was brought
thither,

Forc'd by her husband, and there left.
VOLT. Most true.

CEL. How ready is heaven to those
that pray!

¹⁶⁰ The Scrutineo, or Senate House.

1 Avoc. But that
Volpone would have ravish'd her, he
holds

Utterly, false, knowing his impotence.

CORV. Grave fathers, he's possess't;
again, I say,

Possess't: nay, if there be possession,
and

Obsession, he has both.

3 Avoc. Here comes our officer.

[Enter VOLPONE.]

VOLP. The parasite will straight be
here, grave fathers.

4 Avoc. You might invent some
other name, sir varlet.

3 Avoc. Did not the notary meet
him?

VOLP. Not that I know.

4 Avoc. His coming will clear all.

2 Avoc. Yet it is misty.

VOLT. May 't please your father-
hoods——

VOLP. [whispers VOLTORE.] Sir, the
parasite

Will'd me to tell you that his master
lives;

That you are still the man; your hopes
the same;

And this was only a jest——

VOLT. How?

VOLP. Sir, to try

If you were firm, and how you stood
affected.

VOLT. Art sure he lives?

VOLP. Do I live, sir?

VOLT. O me!

I was too violent.

VOLP. Sir, you may redeem it.

They said you were possess't; fall down,
and seem so:

I'll help to make it good. [VOLTORE
falls.] God bless the man!——

Stop your wind hard, and swell—See,
see, see, see!

He vomits crooked pins! His eyes are
set,

Like a dead hare's hung in a poulter's
shop!

His mouth's running away! Do you
see, signior?

Now it is in his belly.

CORV. Ay, the devil!

VOLP. Now in his throat.

CORV. Ay, I perceive it plain.
VOLP. 'Twill out, 'twill out! stand clear. See where it flies,
In shape of a blue toad, with a bat's wings!

Do you not see it, sir?

CORV. What? I think I do.

CORV. 'Tis too manifest.

VOLP. Look! he comes t' himself!

VOLT. Where am I?

VOLP. Take good heart, the worst is past, sir.

You're dispossess.

1 Avoc. What accident is this!

2 Avoc. Sudden and full of wonder!

3 Avoc. If he were Possess, as it appears, all this is nothing.

CORV. He has been often subject to these fits.

1 Avoc. Show him that writing:—do you know it, sir?

VOLP. [*whispers* VOLTORE.] Deny it, sir, forswear it; know it not.

VOLT. Yes, I do know it well, it is my hand;

But all that it contains is false.

BON. O practice! ¹⁹⁰

2 Avoc. What maze is this!

1 Avoc. Is he not guilty then, Whom you there name the parasite?

VOLT. Grave fathers,
No more than his good patron, old Volpone.

4 Avoc. Why, he is dead.

VOLT. O no, my honour'd fathers,
He lives——

1 Avoc. How! lives?

VOLT. Lives.

2 Avoc. This is subtler yet!

3 Avoc. You said he was dead.

VOLT. Never.

3 Avoc. You said so.

CORV. I heard so.

4 Avoc. Here comes the gentleman;
make him way.

[*Enter* MOSCA.]

3 Avoc. A stool.

4 Avoc. [*aside.*] A proper man; and
were Volpone dead,

¹⁹⁰ conspiracy.

A fit match for my daughter.

3 Avoc. Give him way.

VOLP. [*aside to* MOSCA.] Mosca, I
was a'most lost; the advocate
Had betray'd all; but now it is re-
cover'd;

All's on the hinge again——Say I am
living.

Mos. What busy knave is this!—

Most reverend fathers,

I sooner had attended your grave
pleasures,

But that my order for the funeral

Of my dear patron did require
me——

VOLP. [*aside.*] Mosca!

Mos. Whom I intend to bury like a
gentleman.

VOLP. [*aside.*] Ay, quick, and cozen
me of all.

2 Avoc. Still stranger!

More intricate!

1 Avoc. And come about again!

4 Avoc. [*aside.*] It is a match, my
daughter is bestow'd.

Mos. [*aside to* VOLPONE.] Will you
gi' me half?

VOLP. First I'll be hang'd.

Mos. I know

Your voice is good, cry not so loud.

1 Avoc. Demand

The advocate.—Sir, did you not affirm
Volpone was alive?

VOLP. Yes, and he is;

This gent'man told me so.—[*aside to*
MOSCA.] Thou shalt have half.

Mos. Whose drunkard is this same?

Speak, some that know him:

I never saw his face.—[*aside to* VOL-
PONE.] I cannot now

Afford it you so cheap.

VOLP. No!

1 Avoc. What say you?

VOLT. The officer told me.

VOLP. I did, grave fathers,
And will maintain he lives, with mine
own life,

And that this creature [*points to*
MOSCA] told me. [*aside.*]—

I was born

With all good stars my enemies.

Mos. Most grave fathers,
If such an insolence as this must

pass

Upon me, I am silent: 'twas not this
For which you sent, I hope.

2 Avoc. Take him away.

VOLP. Mosca!

3 Avoc. Let him be whipt—

VOLP. Wilt thou betray me?

Cozen me?

3 Avoc. And taught to bear himself
Toward a person of his rank.

4 Avoc. Away.

[*The OFFICERS seize VOLPONE.*]

Mos. I humbly thank your father-
hoods.

VOLP. Soft, soft: [*aside.*] Whipt!
And lose all that I have! If I confess,
It cannot be much more.

4 Avoc. Sir, are you married?

VOLP. They'll be alli'd anon; I must
be resolute;

The Fox shall here uncase.

[*Puts off his disguise.*]

Mos. Patron!

VOLP. Nay, now

My ruin shall not come alone; your
match

I'll hinder sure: my substance shall not
glue you,

Nor screw you into a family.

Mos. Why, patron!

VOLP. I am Volpone, and this is my
knave; [*pointing to MOSCA*]

This, [*to VOLTORE*] his own knave; this
[*to CORBACCIO*], avarice's fool;

This, [*to CORVINO*] a chimera of wittol,
fool, and knave:

And, reverend fathers, since we all can
hope

Nought but a sentence, let's not now
despair it.

You hear me brief.

CORV. May it please your father-
hoods—

COM. Silence.

1 Avoc. The knot is now undone by
miracle.

2 Avoc. Nothing can be more clear.

3 Avoc. Or can more prove
These innocent.

1 Avoc. Give 'em their liberty.

BON. Heaven could not long let such
gross crimes be hid.

2 Avoc. If this be held the highway
to get riches,

May I be poor!

3 Avoc. This 's not the gain, but
torment.

1 Avoc. These possess wealth, as
sick men possess fevers,
Which trulier may be said to possess
them.

2 Avoc. Disrobe that parasite.

CORV., Mos. Most honour'd
fathers—

1 Avoc. Can you plead aught to stay
the course of justice?

If you can, speak.

CORV., VOLT. We beg favour.

CEL. And mercy.

1 Avoc. You hurt your innocence,
suing for the guilty.

Stand forth; and first the parasite.
You appear

T' have been the chiefest minister, if
not plotter,

In all these lewd impostures, and now,
lastly,

Have with your impudence abus'd¹⁹¹
the court,

And habit of a gentleman of Venice,
Being a fellow of no birth or blood:

For which our sentence is, first, thou be
whipt;

Then live perpetual prisoner in our gal-
leys.

VOLP. I thank you for him.

Mos. Bane to thy wolfish nature!

1 Avoc. Deliver him to the saff.¹⁹²
[*Mosca is carried out.*] Thou,

Volpone,

By blood and rank a gentleman, canst
not fall

Under like censure; but our judgment
on thee

Is, that thy substance all be straight
confiscate

To the hospital of the Incurabili:
And since the most was gotten by im-
posture,

By feigning lame, gout, palsy, and such
diseases,

Thou art to lie in prison, cramp'd with
irons,

Till thou be'st sick and lame indeed.
Remove him.

[*He is taken from the Bar.*]

VOLP. This is called mortifying of a
Fox.

¹⁹¹ deceived.

¹⁹² under-bailiff.

1 Avoc. Thou, Voltore, to take away
the scandal
Thou hast giv'n all worthy men of thy
profession,
Art banish'd from their fellowship, and
our state.

Corbaccio!—bring him near. We here
possess

Thy son of all thy state, and confine
thee

To the monastery of San Spirito;

Where, since thou knew'st not how to
live well here,

Thou shalt be learn'd to die well.

CORB. Ha! what said he?

COM. You shall know anon, sir.

1 Avoc. Thou, Corvino, shalt
Be straight embark'd from thine own
house, and row'd

Round about Venice, through the
Grand Canal,

Wearing a cap, with fair long ass's ears,
Instead of horns! and so to mount, a
paper

Pinn'd on thy breast, to the Berlina.¹⁹³

CORV. Yes,

And have mine eyes beat out with
stinking fish,

Bruis'd fruit, and rotten eggs—'tis well.

I'm glad

I shall not see my shame yet.

1 Avoc. And to expiate

¹⁹³ pillory.

Thy wrongs done to thy wife, thou art
to send her

Home to her father, with her dowry
trebled:

And these are all your judgments.

ALL. Honour'd fathers——

1 Avoc. Which may not be revok'd.

Now you begin,

When crimes are done and past, and to
be punish'd,

To think what your crimes are. Away
with them!

Let all that see these vices thus re-
warded,

Take heart, and love to study 'em.

Mischiefs feed

Like beasts, till they be fat, and then
they bleed. [*Exeunt.*]

[VOLPONE comes forward.]

"The seasoning of a play is the ap-
plause.

Now, though the Fox be punish'd by
the laws,

He yet doth hope, there is no suff'ring
due,

For any fact¹⁹⁴ which he hath done
'gainst you;

If there be, censure him; here he doubt-
ful stands:

If not, fare jovially, and clap your
hands." [*Exit.*]

¹⁹⁴ deed.

PHILASTER *

OR LOVE LIES A-BLEEDING

FRANCIS BEAUMONT AND JOHN FLETCHER

CHARACTERS

THE KING OF SICILY.
 PHILASTER, *heir to the crown.*
 PHARAMOND, *Prince of Spain.*
 DION, *a Lord.*
 CLEREMONT, } *noble gentlemen,*
 THRASILINE, } *his associates.*
 An Old Captain.
 Five Citizens.
 A Country Fellow.
 Two Woodmen.
 The KING's Guard and Train.

ARETHUSA, *daughter of the KING.*
 EUPHRASIA, *daughter of DION, but disguised like a Page and called BELLARIO.*
 MEGRA, *a lascivious lady.*
 GALATEA, *a wise, modest lady attending the Princess.*
 Two other Ladies.

SCENE—Sicily.¹

ACT I

SCENE I.²

[*Enter DION, CLEREMONT, and THRASILINE.*]

CLE. Here's nor lords nor ladies.

DION. Credit me, gentlemen, I wonder at it. They receiv'd strict charge from the King to attend here; besides, it was boldly published that no officer should forbid any gentleman that desired to attend and hear.

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¹ This list is taken with slight changes from Q₂. Q₂ omits it.

² The presence chamber in the palace.

CLE. Can you guess the cause?

DION. Sir, it is plain, about the Spanish Prince that's come to marry our kingdom's heir and be our sovereign.

THRA. Many that will seem to know much say she looks not on him like a maid in love.

DION. Faith, sir, the multitude, that seldom know any thing but their own opinions, speak that they would have; but the prince, before his own approach, receiv'd so many confident messages from the state, that I think she's resolv'd to be rul'd.

CLE. Sir, it is thought, with her he shall enjoy both these kingdoms of Sicily and Calabria.

DION. Sir, it is without controversy so meant. But 'twill be a troublesome labour for him to enjoy both these kingdoms with safety, the right heir to one of them living, and living so virtuously: especially, the people admiring the bravery of his mind and lamenting his injuries.

CLE. Who? Philaster?

DION. Yes; whose father, we all know, was by our late King of Calabria unrighteously deposed from his fruitful Sicily. Myself drew some blood in those wars, which I would give my hand to be washed from.

CLE. Sir, my ignorance in state-policy will not let me know why, Philaster being heir to one of these kingdoms, the King should suffer him to walk abroad with such free liberty.

DION. Sir, it seems your nature is more constant than to inquire after state-news. But the King, of late, made a hazard of both the kingdoms,

of Sicily and his own, with offering but to imprison Philaster; at which the city was in arms, not to be charm'd down by any state-order or proclamation, till they saw Philaster ride through the streets pleas'd and without a guard: at which they threw their hats and their arms from them; some to make bon-fires, some to drink, all for his deliverance: which wise men say is the cause the King labours to bring in the power of a foreign nation to awe his own with.

[Enter GALATEA, a LADY, and MEGRA.]

THRA. See, the ladies! What's the first?

DION. A wise and modest gentlewoman that attends the princess.

CLE. The second?

DION. She is one that may stand still discreetly enough and ill-favour'dly dance her measure; simpler when she is courted by her friend, and slight her husband.

CLE. The last?

DION. Faith, I think she is one whom the state keeps for the agents of our confederate princes; she'll cog³ and lie with a whole army, before the league shall break. Her name is common through the kingdom, and the trophies of her dishonour advanced beyond Hercules' Pillars. She loves to try the several constitutions of men's bodies; and, indeed, has destroyed the worth of her own body by making experiment upon it for the good of the commonwealth.

CLE. She's a profitable member.

MEG. Peace, if you love me! You shall see these gentlemen stand their ground and not court us.

GAL. What if they should?

LADY. What if they should!

MEG. Nay, let her alone.—What if they should! Why, if they should, I say they were never abroad. What foreigner would do so? It writes them directly untravell'd.

GAL. Why, what if they be?

LADY. What if they be!

MEG. Good madam, let her go on.—What if they be! Why, if they be, I

³ cheat.

will justify, they cannot maintain discourse with a judicious lady, nor make a leg⁴ nor say "Excuse me."

GAL. Ha, ha, ha!

MEG. Do you laugh, madam?

DION. Your desires upon you, ladies!

MEG. Then you must sit beside us.

DION. I shall sit near you then, lady.

MEG. Near me, perhaps; but there's a lady endures no stranger; and to me you appear a very strange fellow.

LADY. Methinks he's not so strange; he would quickly be acquainted.

THRA. Peace, the King!

[Enter KING, PHARAMOND, ARETHUSA, and Train.]

KING. To give a stronger testimony of love

Than sickly promises (which commonly In princes find both birth and burial

In one breath) we have drawn you, worthy sir,

To make your fair endearments to our daughter,

And worthy services known to our subjects,

Now lov'd and wondered at; next, our intent

To plant you deeply our immediate heir Both to our blood and kingdoms. For

this lady, (The best part of your life, as you confirm me,

And I believe,) though her few years and sex

Yet teach her nothing but her fears and blushes,

Desires without desire, discourse and knowledge

Only of what herself is to herself, Make her feel moderate health; and

when she sleeps, In making no ill day, knows no ill

dreams. Think not, dear sir, these undivided

parts, That must mould up a virgin, are put

on To show her so, as borrowed ornaments

To speak her perfect love to you, or add

⁴ bow.

An artificial shadow to her nature,—
No, sir; I boldly dare proclaim her yet
No woman. But woo her still, and
think her modesty

A sweeter mistress than the offer'd
language

Of any dame, were she a queen, whose
eye

Speaks common loves and comforts to
her servants.⁵

Last, noble son (for so I now must
call you),

What I have done thus public, is not
only

To add a comfort in particular

To you or me, but all; and to confirm

The nobles and the gentry of these
kingdoms

By oath to your succession, which shall
be

Within this month at most.

THRA. This will be hardly done.

CLE. It must be ill done, if it be
done.

DION. When 'tis at best, 'twill be
but half done, whilst

So brave a gentleman is wrong'd and
flung off.

THRA. I fear.

CLE. Who does not?

DION. I fear not for myself, and yet
I fear too.

Well, we shall see, we shall see. No
more.

PHA. Kissing your white hand, mis-
tress, I take leave

To thank your royal father; and thus
far

To be my own free trumpet. Under-
stand,

Great King, and these your subjects,
mine that must be,

(For so deserving you have spoke me,
sir,

And so deserving I dare speak myself,)
To what a person, of what eminence,

Ripe expectation, of what faculties,
Manners and virtues, you would wed

your kingdoms;
You in me have your wishes. Oh, this
country!

By more than all the gods, I hold it
happy;

⁵ lovers.

Happy in their dear memories that
have been

Kings great and good; happy in yours
that is;

And from you (as a chronicle to keep
Your noble name from eating age) do I

Opine myself most happy. Gentlemen,
Believe me in a word, a prince's word,

There shall be nothing to make up a
kingdom

Mighty and flourishing, defencèd,
fear'd,

Equal to be commanded and obeyed,
But through the travails of my life I'll

find it.
And tie it to this country. By all the

gods,
My reign shall be so easy to the sub-
ject,

That every man shall be his prince him-
self,

And his own law—yet I his prince and
law.

And dearest lady, to your dearest self
(Dear in the choice of him whose name

and lustre
Must make you more and mightier) let

me say,
You are the blessed'st living; for, sweet

princess,
You shall enjoy a man of men to be

Your servant; you shall make him
yours, for whom

Great queens must die.

THRA. Miraculous!

CLE. This speech calls him Spaniard,
being nothing but a large inventory of

his own commendations.
DION. I wonder what's his price;

for certainly
He'll sell himself, he has so prais'd his
shape.

[Enter PHILASTER.]

But here comes one more worthy those
large speeches,

Than the large speaker of them.
Let me be swallowed quick, if I can

find;
In all the anatomy of yon man's

virtues,
One sinew sound enough to promise for
him,

He shall be constable. By this sun,

He'll ne'er make king unless it be of trifles,

In my poor judgment.

PHI. [*kneeling.*] Right noble sir, as low as my obedience,

And with a heart as loyal as my knee, I beg your favour.

KING. Rise; you have it, sir.

[*PHILASTER rises.*]

DION. Mark but the King, how pale he looks! He fears!

Oh, this same whorson conscience, how it jades us!

KING. Speak your intents, sir.

PHI. Shall I speak 'em freely? Be still my royal sovereign.

KING. As a subject, We give you freedom.

DION. Now it heats.

PHI. Then thus I turn My language to you, prince; you, foreign man!

Ne'er stare nor put on wonder, for you must

Endure me, and you shall. This earth you tread upon

(A dowry, as you hope, with this fair princess),

By my dead father (oh, I had a father, Whose memory I bow to!) was not left To your inheritance, and I up and living—

Having myself about me and my sword, The souls of all my name and memories, These arms and some few friends beside the gods—

To part so calmly with it, and sit still And say, "I might have been." I tell thee, Pharamond,

When thou art king, look I be dead and rotten,

And my name ashes: ⁶ for, hear me, Pharamond!

This very ground thou goest on, this fat earth,

My father's friends made fertile with their faiths,

Before that day of shame shall gape and swallow

Thee and thy nation, like a hungry grave,

Into her hidden bowels, Prince, it shall: By the just gods, it shall!

⁶ Q₂ and Q₃ insert *as I*.

PHA. He's mad; beyond cure, mad.

DION. Here is a fellow has some fire in 's veins:

The outlandish prince looks like a tooth-drawer.

PHI. Sir Prince of popinjays, I'll make it well

Appear to you I am not mad.

KING. You displease us: You are too bold.

PHI. No, sir, I am too tame, Too much a turtle, a thing born without passion,

A faint shadow, that every drunken cloud

Sails over, and makes nothing.

KING. I do not fancy this. Call our physicians; sure, he's somewhat tainted.⁷

THRA. I do not think 't will prove so.

DION. H'as given him a general purge already,

For all the right he has; and now he means

To let him blood. Be constant, gentlemen:

By heaven, I'll run his hazard, Although I run my name out of the kingdom!

CLE. Peace, we are all one soul.

PHA. What you have seen in me to stir offence

I cannot find, unless it be this lady, Offer'd into mine arms with the succession;

Which I must keep, (though it hath pleas'd your fury

To mutiny within you,) without disputing

Your genealogies, or taking knowledge Whose branch you are. The King will leave it me,

And I dare make it mine. You have your answer.

PHI. If thou wert sole inheritor to him

That made the world his,⁸ and couldst see no sun

Shine upon any thing but thine; were Pharamond

As truly valiant as I feel him cold,

⁷ unbalanced in mind.

⁸ i.e. Alexander the Great.

And ring'd amongst the choicest of his friends

(Such as would blush to talk such serious follies,

Or back such bellied⁹ commendations),
And from this presence, spite of all these bugs,¹⁰

You should hear further from me.

KING. Sir, you wrong the prince; I gave you not this freedom
To brave our best friends. You deserve our frown.

Go to; be better temper'd.

PHI. It must be, sir, when I am nobler us'd.

GAL. Ladies,

This would have been a pattern of succession,¹¹

Had he ne'er met this mischief. By my life,

He is the worthiest the true-name of man

This day within my knowledge.

MEG. I cannot tell what you may call your knowledge;

But the other is the man set in mine eye.

Oh, 'tis a prince of wax!¹²

GAL. A dog it is.¹³

KING. Philaster, tell me
The injuries you aim at¹⁴ in your riddles.

PHI. If you had my eyes, sir, and sufferance,

My griefs upon you, and my broken fortunes,

My wants great, and now nought but hopes and fears,

My wrongs would make ill riddles to be laugh'd at.

Dare you be still my king, and right me not?

KING. Give me your wrongs in private.

PHI. Take them,
And ease me of a load would bow strong Atlas. [*They whisper.*]

CLE. He dares not stand the shock.

DION. I cannot blame him; there's

danger in 't. Every man in this age has not a soul of crystal, for all men to read their actions through: men's hearts and faces are so far asunder, that they hold no intelligence. Do but view yon stranger well, and you shall see a fever through all his bravery,¹⁵ and feel him shake like a true tenant.¹⁶ If he give not back his crown again upon the report of an elder-gun, I have no augury.

KING. Go to;

Be more yourself, as you respect our favour;

You'll stir us else. Sir, I must have you know,

That y' are and shall be, at our pleasure, what

Fashion we will put upon you. Smooth your brow,

Or by the gods—

PHI. I am dead, sir; y' are my fate. It was not I

Said, I was wrong'd: I carry all about me

My weak stars lead me to, all my weak fortunes.

Who dares in all this presence speak, (that is

But man of flesh, and may be mortal,) tell me

I do not most entirely love this prince, And honour his full virtues!

KING. Sure, he's possess'd.

PHI. Yes, with my father's spirit.

It's here, O King,

A dangerous spirit! Now he tells me, King,

I was a king's heir, bids me be a king, And whispers to me, these are all my

subjects.

'Tis strange he will not let me sleep, but dives

Into my fancy, and there gives me shapes

That kneel and do me service, cry me king.

But I'll suppress him; he's a factious spirit,

And will undo me.—[*to PHARAMOND.*] Noble sir, your hand;

¹⁵ ostentation, swagger.

¹⁶ Probably corrupt. Q₁ *truant*. Mod. edd. conjecture *tyrant*; *recreant*; in a true tertian.

⁹ swollen. Q₁ and Q₂ *belied*. ¹⁰ bugbears.

¹¹ to succeeding kings. ¹² a model prince.

¹³ The phrase, *a dog of wax*, is used elsewhere in a contemptuous sense, but has not been explained.

¹⁴ refer to.

I am your servant.

KING. Away! I do not like this:
I'll make you tamer, or I'll dispossess
you

Both of your life and spirit. For this
time

I pardon your wild speech, without so
much

As your imprisonment.

[*Exeunt KING, PHARAMOND,
ARETHUSA and Train.*]

DION. I thank you, sir; you dare
not for the people.

GAL. Ladies, what think you now
of this brave fellow?

MEG. A pretty talking fellow, hot
at hand. But eye yon stranger: is he
not a fine complete gentleman? Oh,
these strangers, I do affect¹⁷ them
strangely! They do the rarest home-
things, and please the fullest! As I
live, I could love all the nation over
and over for his sake.

GAL. Gods comfort your poor head-
piece, lady! 'Tis a weak one, and had
need of a nightcap.

[*Exeunt LADIES.*]

DION. See, how his fancy labours!
Has he not
Spoke home and bravely? What a
dangerous train

Did he give fire to! How he shook the
King,
Made his soul melt within him, and
his blood

Run into whey! It stood upon his brow
Like a cold winter dew.

PHI. Gentlemen,
You have no suit to me? I am no
minion.

You stand, methinks, like men that
would be courtiers,
If I¹⁸ could well be flatter'd at a price
Not to undo your children. You're all
honest:

Go, get you home again, and make
your country

A virtuous court, to which your great
ones may,

In their diseased age, retire and live
recluse.

¹⁷ love.

¹⁸ Mason conj. Qq. F. *you*. If you could
flatter me without ruining your families by
antagonizing the king.

CLE. How do you, worthy sir?

PHI. Well, very well;
And so well that, if the King please
you, I find

I may live many years.

DION. The King must please,
Whilst we know what you are and who
you are,

Your wrongs and virtues.¹⁹ Shrink not,
worthy sir,

But add your father to you; in whose
name

We'll waken all the gods, and conjure
up

The rods of vengeance, the abused
people,

Who, like to raging torrents, shall swell
high,

And so begirt the dens of these male-
dragons,

That, through the strongest safety, they
shall beg

For mercy at your sword's point.

PHI. Friends, no more;
Our ears may be corrupted; 'tis an
age

We dare not trust our wills to. Do
you love me?

THRA. Do we love Heaven and
Honour?

PHI. My Lord Dion, you had
A virtuous gentlewoman call'd you
father;

Is she yet alive?

DION. Most honour'd sir, she is;
And, for the penance but of an idle
dream

Has undertook a tedious pilgrimage.

[*Enter a LADY.*]

PHI. Is it to me, or any of these
gentlemen, you come?

LADY. To you, brave lord; the prin-
cess would entreat

Your present company.

PHI. The princess send for me! You
are mistaken.

LADY. If you be called Philaster, 'tis
to you.

PHI. Kiss her fair hand, and say I
will attend her. [*Exit LADY.*]

DION. Do you know what you do?

PHI. Yes; go to see a woman.

¹⁹ Q₂₀ Other edd. *injuries*.

CLE. But do you weigh the danger
you are in?

PHI. Danger in a sweet face!

By Jupiter, I must not fear a woman!

THRA. But are you sure it was the
princess sent?

It may be some foul train to catch your
life.

PHI. I do not think it, gentlemen;
she's noble.

Her eye may shoot me dead, or those
true red

And white friends in her cheeks may
steal my soul out;

There's all the danger in 't. But, be
what may,

Her single²⁰ name hath arm'd me.

[Exit.]

DION. Go on,

And be as truly happy as thou'rt fear-
less!—

Come, gentlemen, let's make our friends
acquainted,

Lest the King prove false. [Exeunt.]

SCENE II.²¹

[Enter ARETHUSA and a LADY.]

ARE. Comes he not?

LADY. Madam?

ARE. Will Philaster come?

LADY. Dear madam, you were wont
to credit me

At first.

ARE. But didst thou tell me so?

I am forgetful, and my woman's
strength

Is so o'ercharged with dangers like to
grow

About my marriage, that these under-
things.

Dare not abide in such a troubled sea.
How lookt he when he told thee he

would come?

LADY. Why, well.

ARE. And not a little fearful?

LADY. Fear, madam! Sure, he knows
not what it is.

ARE. You all are of his faction; the
whole court

Is bold in praise of him; whilst I

²⁰ mere.

²¹ Arethusa's apartment in the palace.

May live neglected, and do noble
things,

As fools in strife throw gold into the
sea,

Drown'd in the doing. But, I know
he fears.

LADY. Fear, madam! Methought,
his looks hid more

Of love than fear.

ARE. Of love! To whom? To you?
Did you deliver those plain words I

sent,

With such a winning gesture and quick
look

That you have caught him?

LADY. Madam, I mean to you.

ARE. Of love to me! Alas, thy igno-
rance

Lets thee not see the crosses of our
births!

Nature, that loves not to be questionèd
Why she did this or that, but has her

ends,

And knows she does well, never gave
the world

Two things so opposite, so contrary

As he and I am: if a bowl of blood

Drawn from this arm of mine would
poison thee.

A draught of his would cure thee. Of
love to me!

LADY. Madam, I think I hear him.

ARE. Bring him in.

[Exit LADY.]

You gods, that would not have your
dooms withstood,

Whose holy wisdoms at this time it is
To make the passion of a feeble maid

The way unto your justice, I obey.

[Re-enter LADY with PHILASTER.]

LADY. Here is my Lord Philaster.

ARE. Oh, 'tis well.

Withdraw yourself. [Exit LADY.]

PHI. Madam, your messenger

Made me believe you wish'd to speak
with me.

ARE. 'Tis true, Philaster; but the
words are such

I have to say, and do so ill beseem

The mouth of woman, that I wish them
said,

And yet am loth to speak them. Have
you known

That I have aught detracted from your worth?

Have I in person wrong'd you, or have set

My baser instruments to throw disgrace

Upon your virtues?

PHI. Never, madam, you.

ARE. Why, then, should you, in such a public place,

Injure a princess, and a scandal lay

Upon my fortunes, fam'd to be so great,

Calling a great part of my dowry in question?

PHI. Madam, this truth which I shall speak will be

Foolish: but, for your fair and virtuous self,

I could afford myself to have no right To any thing you wish'd.

ARE. Philaster, know,

I must enjoy these kingdoms.

PHI. Madam, both?

ARE. Both, or I die: by heaven, I die, Philaster,

If I not calmly may enjoy them both.

PHI. I would do much to save that noble life;

Yet would be loth to have posterity

Find in our stories, that Philaster gave

His right unto a sceptre and a crown

To save a lady's longing.

ARE. Nay, then, hear:

I must and will have them, and more——

PHI. What more?

ARE. Or lose that little life the gods prepared

To trouble this poor piece of earth withal.

PHI. Madam, what more?

ARE. Turn, then, away thy face.

PHI. No.

ARE. Do.

PHI. I can endure it. Turn away my face!

I never yet saw enemy that lookt

So dreadfully, but that I thought myself

As great a basilisk ²² as he; or spake So horrible, but that I thought my tongue

²² a fabulous serpent that killed with a glance.

Bore thunder underneath, as much as his;

Nor beast that I could turn from. Shall I then

Begin to fear sweet sounds? A lady's voice,

Whom I do love? Say you would have my life;

Why, I will give it you; for 'tis of me A thing so loath'd, and unto you that ask

Of so poor use, that I shall make no price:

If you entreat, I will unmov'dly hear.

ARE. Yet, for my sake, a little bend thy looks.

PHI. I do.

ARE. Then know, I must have them and thee.

PHI. And me?

ARE. Thy love; without which, all the land

Discovered yet will serve me for no use But to be buried in.

PHI. Is 't possible?

ARE. With it, it were too little to bestow

On thee. Now, though thy breath do strike me dead,

(Which, know, it may,) I have unript my breast.

PHI. Madam, you are too full of noble thoughts,

To lay a train for this condemn'd life, Which you may have for asking. To suspect

Were base, where I deserve no ill. Love you!

By all my hopes, I do, above my life! But how this passion should proceed from you

So violently, would amaze a man

That would be jealous.²³

ARE. Another soul into my body shot

Could not have fill'd me with more strength and spirit

Than this thy breath. But spend not hasty time

In seeking how I came thus: 'tis the gods,

The gods, that make me so; and, sure, our love

²³ suspicious.

Will be the nobler and the better blest,
In that the secret justice of the gods
Is mingled with it. Let us leave, and
kiss;

Lest some unwelcome guest should fall
betwixt us,

And we should part without it.

PHI. 'Twill be ill
I should abide here long.

ARE. 'Tis true; and worse
You should come often. How shall we
devise

To hold intelligence, that our true loves,
On any new occasion, may agree
What path is best to tread?

PHI. I have a boy,
Sent by the gods, I hope, to this intent,
Not yet seen in the court. Hunting the
buck,

I found him sitting by a fountain's
side,

Of which he borrow'd some to quench
his thirst,

And paid the nymph again as much in
tears.

A garland lay him by, made by him-
self

Of many several flowers bred in the
vale,

Stuck in that mystic order that the
rareness

Delighted me: but ever when he turn'd
His tender eyes upon 'em, he would
weep,

As if he meant to make 'em grow again.
Seeing such pretty helpless innocence
Dwell in his face, I ask'd him all his
story.

He told me that his parents gentle
died,

Leaving him to the mercy of the fields,
Which gave him roots; and of the
crystal springs,

Which did not stop their courses; and
the sun,

Which still, he thank'd him, yielded
him his light.

Then took he up his garland, and did
show

What every flower, as country-people
hold,

Did signify, and how all, ordered thus,
Express his grief; and, to my thoughts,
did read

The prettiest lecture of his country-
art

That could be wisht: so that methought
I could

Have studied it. I gladly entertain'd
Him, who was glad to follow; and have
got

The trustiest, loving'st, and the gentlest
boy

That ever master kept. Him will I
send

To wait on you, and bear our hidden
love.

ARE. 'Tis well; no more.

[*Re-enter LADY.*]

LADY. Madam, the prince is come to
do his service.

ARE. What will you do, Philaster,
with yourself?

PHI. Why, that which all the gods
have pointed out for me.

ARE. Dear, hide thyself.—

Bring in the prince. [*Exit LADY.*]

PHI. Hide me from Pharamond!
When thunder speaks, which is the
voice of God,

Though I do reverence, yet I hide me
not;

And shall a stranger-prince have leave
to brag

Unto a foreign nation, that he made
Philaster hide himself?

ARE. He cannot know it.

PHI. Though it should sleep for ever
to the world,

It is a simple sin to hide myself,
Which will for ever on my conscience
lie.

ARE. Then, good Philaster, give him
scope and way

In what he says; for he is apt to
speak

What you are loth to hear. For my
sake, do.

PHI. I will.

[*Re-enter LADY with PHARAMOND.*]

PHA. My princely mistress, as true
lovers ought, [*Exit LADY.*]

I come to kiss these fair hands, and
to show,

In outward ceremonies, the dear love
Writ in my heart.

PHI. If I shall have an answer no directlier,
 I am gone.
 PHA. To what would he have answer?
 ARE. To his claim unto the kingdom.
 PHA. Sirrah, I forbare you before the King—
 PHI. Good sir, do so still; I would not talk with you.
 PHA. But now the time is fitter. Do but offer
 To make mention of right to any kingdom,
 Though it be scarce habitable—
 PHI. Good sir, let me go.
 PHA. And by the gods—
 PHI. Peace, Pharamond! if thou—
 ARE. Leave us, Philaster.
 PHI. I have done. *[Going.]*
 PHA. You are gone! by Heaven I'll fetch you back.
 PHI. You shall not need. *[Returning.]*
 PHA. What now?
 PHI. Know, Pharamond, I loathe to brawl with such a blast as thou,
 Who art nought but a valiant voice; but if
 Thou shalt provoke me further, men shall say,
 Thou wert, and not lament it.
 PHA. Do you slight My greatness so, and in the chamber of The princess?
 PHI. It is a place to which I must confess
 I owe a reverence; but were 't the church,
 Ay, at the altar, there's no place so safe,
 Where thou dar'st injure me, but I dare kill thee.
 And for your greatness, know, sir, I can grasp
 You and your greatness thus, thus into nothing.
 Give not a word, not a word back! Farewell. *[Exit.]*
 PHA. 'Tis an odd fellow, madam; we must stop

His mouth with some office when we are married.
 ARE. You were best make him your controller.
 PHA. I think he would discharge it well. But, madam,
 I hope our hearts are knit; but yet so slow
 The ceremonies of state are, that 't will be long
 Before our hands be so. If then you please,
 Being agreed in heart, let us not wait For dreaming form, but take a little stolen
 Delights, and so prevent²⁴ our joys to come.
 ARE. If you dare speak such thoughts,
 I must withdraw in honour. *[Exit.]*
 PHA. The constitution of my body will never hold out till the wedding; I must seek elsewhere. *[Exit.]*

ACT II

SCENE I.²⁵

[Enter PHILASTER and BELLARIO.]

PHI. And thou shalt find her honourable, boy;
 Full of regard unto thy tender youth, For thine own modesty; and, for my sake,
 Apter to give than thou wilt be to ask, Ay, or deserve.
 BEL. Sir, you did take me up When I was nothing; and only yet am something
 By being yours. You trusted me unknown;
 And that which you were apt to conster²⁶
 A simple innocence in me, perhaps Might have been craft, the cunning of a boy
 Hard'n'd in lies and theft: yet ventur'd you
 To part my miseries and me: for which, I never can expect to serve a lady

²⁴ anticipate.

²⁵ An apartment in the palace.

²⁶ construe, interpret.

That bears more honour in her breast than you.

PHI. But, boy, it will prefer ²⁷ thee.

Thou art young,

And bear'st a childish overflowing love
To them that clap thy cheeks and
speak thee fair yet;

But when thy judgment comes to rule
those passions,

Thou wilt remember best those careful
friends

That plac'd thee in the noblest way of
life.

She is a princess I prefer thee to.

BEL. In that small time that I have,
seen the world,

I never knew a man hasty to part
With a servant he thought trusty. I
remember,

My father would prefer the boys he
kept

To greater men than he; but did it not
Till they were grown too saucy for
himself.

PHI. Why, gentle boy, I find no
fault at all

In thy behaviour.

BEL. Sir, if I have made
A fault in ignorance, instruct my
youth:

I shall be willing, if not apt, to learn;
Age and experience will adorn my mind
With larger knowledge; and if I have
done

A wilful fault, think me not past all
hope

For once. What master holds so strict
a hand

Over his boy, that he will part with him
Without one warning? Let me be cor-
rected

To break my stubbornness, if it be
so,

Rather than turn me off; and I shall
mend.

PHI. Thy love doth plead so prettily
to stay,

That, trust me, I could weep to part
with thee.

Alas, I do not turn thee off! Thou
knowest

It is my business that doth call thee
hence;

²⁷ advance.

And when thou art with her, thou
dwell'st with me,

Think so, and 'tis so; and when time
is full,

That thou hast well discharg'd this
heavy trust,

Laid on so weak a one, I will again
With joy receive thee; as I live, I will!

Nay, weep not, gentle boy. 'Tis more
than time

Thou didst attend the princess.

BEL. I am gone.

But since I am to part with you, my
lord,

And none knows whether I shall live
to do

More service for you, take this little
prayer:

Heaven bless your loves, your fights,
all your designs!

May sick men, if they have your wish,
be well;

And Heaven hate those you curse,
though I be one! [Exit.]

PHI. The love of boys unto their
lords is strange;

I have read wonders of it; yet this boy
For my sake (if a man may judge by
looks

And speech) would out-do story. I
may see

A day to pay him for his loyalty.
[Exit.]

SCENE II.²⁸

[Enter PHARAMOND.]

PHA. Why should these ladies stay
so long? They must come this way.
I know the queen employs 'em not; for
the reverend mother ²⁹ sent me word,
they would all be for the garden. If
they should all prove honest ³⁰ now, I
were in a fair taking; I was never so
long without sport in my life, and, in
my conscience, 'tis not my fault. Oh,
for our country ladies!

[Enter GALATEA.]

Here's one bolted; I'll hound at her.—
Madam!

²⁸ A gallery in the palace.

²⁹ in charge of the maids of honor.

³⁰ chaste.

GAL. Your grace!

PHA. Shall I not be a trouble?

GAL. Not to me, sir

PHA. Nay, nay, you are too quick.

By this sweet hand——

GAL. You'll be forsworn, sir; 'tis but an old glove.

If you will talk at distance, I am for you:

But, good prince, be not bawdy, nor do not brag;

These two I bar;

And then, I think, I shall have sense enough

To answer all the weighty apophthegms
Your royal blood shall manage.

PHA. Dear lady, can you love?

GAL. Dear prince! how dear? I ne'er cost you a coach yet, nor put you to the dear repentance of a banquet. Here's no scarlet, sir, to blush the sin out it was given for. This wire mine own hair covers; and this face has been so far from being dear to any, that it ne'er cost penny painting; and, for the rest of my poor wardrobe, such as you see, it leaves no hand³¹ behind it, to make the jealous mercer's wife curse our good doings.

PHA. You mistake me, lady.

GAL. Lord, I do so; would you or I could help it!

[PHA. You're very dangerous bit-ter, like a potion.

GAL. No, sir, I do not mean to purge you, though

I mean to purge a little time on you.]³²

PHA. Do ladies of this country use to give

No more respect to men of my full being?

GAL. Full being! I understand you not, unless your grace means growing to fatness; and then your only remedy (upon my knowledge, prince) is, in a morning, a cup of neat white wine brewed with carduus,³³ then fast till supper; about eight you may eat; use exercise, and keep a sparrow-hawk; you can shoot in a tiller;³⁴ but, of all, your grace must fly phlebotomy,³⁵

fresh pork, conger,³⁶ and clarified whey; they are all dullers of the vital spirits.

PHA. Lady, you talk of nothing all this while.

GAL. 'Tis very true, sir; I talk of you.

PHA. [*aside.*] This is a crafty wench; I like her wit well; 'twill be rare to stir up a leaden appetite. She's a Danaë, and must be courted in a shower of gold.—Madam, look here; all these, and more than——

GAL. What have you there, my lord? Gold! now, as I live, 'tis fair gold! You would have silver for it, to play with the pages. You could not have taken me in a worse time; but, if you have present use, my lord, I'll send my man with silver and keep your gold for you.

PHA. Lady, lady!

GAL. She's coming, sir, behind, will take white money.—

[*aside.*] Yet for all this I'll match ye.

[*Exit behind the hangings.*]

PHA. If there be but two such more in this kingdom, and near the court, we may even hang up our harps. Ten such camphire³⁷ constitutions as this would call the golden age again in question, and teach the old way for every ill-fac'd husband to get his own children; and what a mischief that would breed, let all consider!

[*Enter MEGRA.*]

Here's another: if she be of the same last, the devil shall pluck her on.—Many fair mornings, lady!

MEG. As many mornings bring as many days,

Fair, sweet and hopeful to your grace!

PHA. [*aside.*] She gives good words yet; sure this wench is free.³⁸

If your more serious business do not call you,

Let me hold quarter with you; we will talk

An hour out quickly.

MEG. What would your grace talk of?

PHA. Of some such pretty subject as yourself:

³⁶ conger-eel. ³⁷ i.e. cold. ³⁸ responsive.

³¹ note of indebtedness. ³² only in Q.

³³ a kind of thistle used as a medicine.

³⁴ cross-bow. ³⁵ blood letting.

I'll go no further than your eye, or lip;

There's theme enough for one man for an age.

MEG. Sir, they stand right, and my lips are yet even,
Smooth, young enough, ripe enough, and red enough,
Or my glass wrongs me.

PHA. Oh, they are two twinn'd cherries dy'd in blushes

Which those fair suns above with their bright beams

Reflect upon and ripen. Sweetest beauty,

Bow down those branches, that the longing taste

Of the faint looker-on may meet those blessings,

And taste and live. *[They kiss.]*

MEG. *[aside.]* Oh, delicate sweet prince!

She that hath snow enough about her heart

To take the wanton spring of ten such lines off,

May be a nun without probation.—Sir, You have in such neat poetry gathered

a kiss,
That if I had but five lines of that number,

Such pretty begging blanks,³⁹ I should commend

Your forehead on your cheeks, and kiss you too.

PHA. Do it in prose; you cannot miss it, madam.

MEG. I shall, I shall.

PHA. By my life, but you shall not; I'll prompt you first. *[kisses her.]* Can you do it now?

MEG. Methinks 'tis easy, now you ha' done 't before me;

But yet I should stick at it.

[Kisses him.]

PHA. Stick till to-morrow; I'll ne'er part you, sweetest. But we

lose time:
Can you love me?

MEG. Love you, my lord! How would you have me love you?

PHA. I'll teach you in a short sentence, 'cause I will not load your

³⁹ blank verses.

memory; this is all: love me, and lie with me.

MEG. Was it "lie with you" that you said?

'Tis impossible.

PHA. Not to a willing mind, that will endeavour. If I do not teach you to do it as easily in one night as you'll go to bed, I'll lose my royal blood for 't.

MEG. Why, prince, you have a lady of your own

That yet wants teaching.

PHA. I'll sooner teach a mare the old measures⁴⁰ than teach her anything belonging to the function. She's afraid to lie with herself if she have but any masculine imaginations about her. I know, when we are married, I must ravish her.

MEG. By mine honour, that's a foul fault, indeed;

But time and your good help will wear it out, sir.

PHA. And for any other I see, excepting your dear self, dearest lady, I had rather be Sir Tim the schoolmaster, and leap a dairy-maid, madam.

MEG. Has your grace seen the court-star, Galatea?

PHA. Out upon her! She's as cold of her favour as an apoplex; she sail'd by but now.

MEG. And how do you hold her wit, sir?

PHA. I hold her wit? The strength of all the guard cannot hold it, if they were tied to it; she would blow 'em out of the kingdom. They talk of Jupiter; he's but a squib-cracker to her: look well about you, and you may find a tongue-bolt. But speak, sweet, lady, shall I be freely welcome?

MEG. Whither?

PHA. To your bed. If you mistrust my faith, you do me the unnoblest wrong.

MEG. I dare not, prince, I dare not.

PHA. Make your own conditions, my purse shall seal 'em, and what you dare imagine you can want, I'll furnish you withal. Give two hours to your thoughts every morning about it.

⁴⁰ stately dances.

Come I know you are bashful;
Speak in my ear, will you be mine?
Keep this,

And with it, me: soon I will visit you.

MEG. My lord, my chamber's most
unsafe; but when 'tis night,
I'll find some means to slip into your
lodging;

Till when——

PHA. Till when, this and my heart
go with thee!

[*Exeunt several ways.*]

[*Re-enter GALATEA from behind
the hangings.*]

GAL. Oh, thou pernicious petticoat
prince! are these your virtues? Well,
if I do not lay a train to blow your
sport up, I am no woman: and, Lady
Towsabel, I'll fit you for 't. [*Exit.*]

SCENE III.^a

[*Enter ARETHUSA and a LADY.*]

ARE. Where's the boy?

LADY. Within, madam.

ARE. Gave you him gold to buy him
clothes?

LADY. I did.

ARE. And has he done 't?

LADY. Yes, madam.

ARE. 'Tis a pretty sad-talking boy,
is it not? Asked you his name?

LADY. No, madam.

[*Enter GALATEA.*]

ARE. Oh, you are welcome. What
good news?

GAL. As good as any one can tell
your grace,

That says she has done that you would
have wish'd.

ARE. Hast thou discovered?

GAL. I have strain'd a point of mod-
esty for you.

ARE. I prithee, how?

GAL. In list'ning after bawdry. I
see, let a lady live never so modestly,
she shall be sure to find a lawful time
to hearken after bawdry. Your prince,
brave Pharamond, was so hot on 't!

ARE. With whom?

^a Arethusa's apartment in the palace.

GAL. Why, with the lady I sus-
pected. I can tell the time and place.

ARE. Oh, when, and where?

GAL. To-night, his lodging.

ARE. Run thyself into the presence;
mingle there again

With other ladies; leave the rest to me.

[*Exit GALATEA.*]

If destiny (to whom we dare not say,
"Why didst thou this?") have not de-
creed it so,

In lasting leaves (whose smallest char-
acters

Were never alter'd yet), this match
shall break.—

Where's the boy?

LADY. Here, madam.

[*Enter BELLARIO.*]

ARE. Sir, you are sad to change your
service; is 't not so?

BEL. Madam, I have not chang'd;
I wait on you,

To do him service.

ARE. Thou disclaim'st in me.
Tell me thy name.

BEL. Bellario.

ARE. Thou canst sing and play?

BEL. If grief will give me leave,
madam, I can,

ARE. Alas, what kind of grief can
thy years know?

Hadst thou a curst master when thou
went'st to school?

Thou art not capable of other grief;
Thy brows and cheeks are smooth as
waters be

When no breath troubles them. Be-
lieve me, boy,

Care seeks out wrinkled brows and hol-
low eyes,

And builds himself caves, to abide in
them.

Come, sir, tell me truly, doth your lord
love me?

BEL. Love, madam! I know not
what it is.

ARE. Canst thou know grief, and
never yet knew'st love?

Thou art deceiv'd, boy. Does he speak
of me

As if he wish'd me well?

BEL. If it be love
To forget all respect of his own friends

With thinking of your face; if it be
 love
 To sit cross-arm'd and sigh away the
 day,
 Mingled with starts, crying your name
 as loud
 And hastily as men i' the streets do
 fire;
 If it be love to weep himself away
 When he but hears of any lady dead
 Or kill'd, because it might have been
 your chance;
 If, when he goes to rest (which will
 not be),
 'Twixt every prayer he says, to name
 you once,
 As others drop a bead, be to be in love,
 Then, madam, I dare swear he loves
 you.
 ARE. Oh you're a cunning boy, and
 taught to lie
 For your lord's credit! But thou
 know'st a lie
 That bears this sound is welcomer to
 me
 Than any truth that says he loves me
 not.
 Lead the way, boy.—[to LADY.] Do
 you attend me too.—
 'Tis thy lord's business hastes me thus.
 Away! [Exeunt.]

SCENE IV.⁴²

[Enter DION, CLEREMONT, THRA-
 SILINE, MEGRA, and GALATEA.]

DION. Come, ladies, shall we talk a
 round? As men
 Do walk a mile, women should talk an
 hour
 After supper: 'tis their exercise.
 GAL. 'Tis late.
 MEG. 'Tis all
 My eyes will do to lead me to my bed.
 GAL. I fear, they are so heavy, you'll
 scarce find
 The way to your own lodging with 'em
 to-night.

[Enter PHARAMOND.]

THRA. The prince!

⁴² Before Pharamond's lodging in the court
 of the palace.

PHA. Not a-bed, ladies? You're
 good sitters-up.
 What think you of a pleasant dream,
 to last
 Till morning?

MEG. I should choose, my lord, a
 pleasing wake before it.

[Enter ARETHUSA and BELLARIO.]

ARE. 'Tis well, my lord; you're
 courting of these ladies.—

Is 't not late, gentlemen?

CLE. Yes, madam.

ARE. Wait you there. [Exit.]

MEG. [aside.] She's jealous, as I live.

Look you, my lord,

The princess has a Hylas, an Adonis.

PHA. His form is angel-like.

MEG. Why, this is he that must,
 when you are wed,

Sit by your pillow, like young Apollo,
 with

His hand and voice binding your
 thoughts in sleep,

The princess does provide him for you
 and for herself.

PHA. I find no music in these
 boys.

MEG. Nor I:
 They can do little, and that small they
 do,

They have not wit to hide.

DION. Serves he the princess?

THRA. Yes.

DION. 'Tis a sweet boy: how
 brave⁴³ she keeps him!

PHA. Ladies all, good rest; I mean
 to kill a buck

To-morrow morning ere you've done
 your dreams.

MEG. All happiness attend your
 grace! [Exit PHARAMOND.]

Gentlemen, good rest.—

Come, shall we go to bed?

GAL. Yes.—All good night.

DION. May your dreams be true to
 you!—

[Exeunt GALATEA and MEGRA.]

What shall we do, gallants? 'tis late.
 The King

Is up still: see, he comes; a guard along
 With him.

⁴³ finely dressed.

[Enter KING, ARETHUSA, and Guard.]

KING. Look your intelligence be true.

ARE. Upon my life, it is; and I do hope

Your highness will not tie me to a man

That in the heat of wooing throws me off,

And takes another.

DION. What should this mean?

KING. If it be true,
That lady had been better have embraced

Cureless diseases. Get you to your rest:

You shall be righted.

[Exeunt ARETHUSA and BELLARIO.]

—Gentlemen, draw near;

We shall employ you. Is young Pharamond

Come to his lodging?

DION. I saw him enter there.

KING. Haste, some of you, and cunningly discover

If Megra be in her lodging.

[Exit DION.]

CLE. Sir,

She parted hence but now, with other ladies.

KING. If she be there, we shall not need to make

A vain discovery of our suspicion.

[Aside.] You gods, I see that who unrighteously

Holds wealth or state from others shall be curst

In that which meaner men are blest withal:

Ages to come shall know no male of him

Left to inherit, and his name shall be Blotted from earth; if he have any child,

It shall be crossly match'd; the gods themselves

Shall sow wild strife betwixt her lord and her.

Yet, if it be your wills, forgive the sin I have committed; let it not fall

Upon this understanding child of mine! She has not broke your laws. But how

can I

Look to be heard of gods that must be just,

Praying upon the ground I hold by wrong?

[Re-enter DION.]

DION. Sir, I have asked, and her women swear she is within; but they, I think, are bawds. I told 'em, I must speak with her; they laught, and said, their lady lay speechless. I said, my business was important; they said, their lady was about it. I grew hot, and cried, my business was a matter that concern'd life and death; they answered, so was sleeping, at which their lady was. I urg'd again, she had scarce time to be so since last I saw her: they smil'd again, and seem'd to instruct me that sleeping was nothing but lying down and winking.⁴⁴ Answers more direct I could not get: in short, sir, I think she is not there.

KING. 'Tis then no time to dally.—

You o' the guard,
Wait at the back door of the prince's lodging,

And see that none pass thence, upon your lives. [Exeunt Guards.]

Knock, gentlemen; knock loud; louder yet.

[DION, CLEREMONT, &c. knock at the door of PHARAMOND's lodging.]

What, has their pleasure taken off their hearing?—

I'll break your meditations.—Knock again.—

Not yet? I do not think he sleeps, having this

Larum by him.—Once more.—Pharamond! prince!

[PHARAMOND appears above.]

PHA. What saucy groom knocks at this dead of night?

Where be our waiters? By my vexèd soul,

He meets his death that meets me, for his boldness.

KING. Prince, prince, you wrong your thoughts; we are your friends:

Come down.

PHA. The King!

⁴⁴ closing the eyes.

KING. The same, sir. Come down, sir:
We have cause of present counsel with you.

PHA. If your grace please
To use me, I'll attend you to your chamber.

[Enter PHARAMOND below.]

KING. No, 'tis too late, prince; I'll make bold with yours.

PHA. I have some private reasons to myself
Makes me unmannerly, and say you cannot.—

[They press to come in.]

Nay, press not forward, gentlemen; he must

Come through my life that comes here.

KING. Sir, be resolv'd ⁴⁵ I must and will come.—Enter.

PHA. I will not be dishonour'd.
He that enters, enters upon his death.
Sir, 'tis a sign you make no stranger of me,

To bring these renegadoes to my chamber

At these unseasoned hours.

KING. Why do you Chafe yourself so? You are not wrong'd nor shall be;
Only I'll search your lodging, for some cause

To ourself known.—Enter, I say.

PHA. I say, no.

[Enter MEGRA above.]

MEG. Let 'em enter, prince, let 'em enter;
I am up and ready: ⁴⁶ I know their business;

'Tis the poor breaking of a lady's honour

They hunt so hotly after; let 'em enjoy it.—

You have your business, gentlemen; I lay here.

Oh, my lord the King, this is not noble in you

To make public the weakness of a woman!

KING. Come down.

⁴⁵ convinced.

⁴⁶ dressed.

MEG. I dare, my lord. Your hootings and your clamours,
Your private whispers and your broad leerings,

Can no more vex my soul than this base carriage.⁴⁷

But I have vengeance yet in store for some

Shall, in the most contempt you can have of me,

Be joy and nourishment.

KING. Will you come down?

MEG. Yes, to laugh at your worst; but I shall wring you,

If my skill fail me not. [Exit above.]

KING. Sir, I must dearly chide you for this looseness;

You have wrong'd a worthy lady; but, no more.—

Conduct him to my lodging and to bed.

[Exeunt PHARAMOND and Attendants.]

CLE. Get him another wench, and you bring him to bed indeed.

DION. 'Tis strange a man cannot ride a stage

Or two, to breathe himself, without a warrant,

If this gear hold, that lodgings be search'd thus.

Pray God we may lie with our own wives in safety,

That they be not by some trick of state mistaken!

[Enter Attendants with MEGRA below.]

KING. Now, lady of honour, where's your honour now?

No man can fit your palate but the prince.

Thou most ill-shrouded rottenness, thou piece

Made by a painter and a 'pothecary,
Thou troubled sea of lust, thou wilderness

Inhabited by wild thoughts, thou swoln cloud

Of infection, thou ripe mine of all diseases,

Thou all-sin, all-hell, and last, all-devils, tell me,

Had you none to pull on with your courtesies

⁴⁷ behavior.

But he that must be mine, and wrong
my daughter?

By all the gods, all these, and all the
pages,

And all the court, shall hoot thee
through the court,

Fling rotten oranges, make ribald
rhymes,

And sear thy name with candles upon
walls!

Do you laugh, Lady Venus?

MEG. Faith, sir, you must pardon
me;

I cannot choose but laugh to see you
merry.

If you do this, O King! nay, if you dare
do it,

By all those gods you swore by, and
as many

More of my own, I will have fellows,
and such

Fellows in it, as shall make noble
mirth!

The princess, your dear daughter, shall
stand by me

On walls, and sung in ballads, any
thing.

Urge me no more; I know her and her
haunts,

Her lays, leaps, and outlays, and will
discover all;

Nay, will dishonour her. I know the
boy

She keeps; a handsome boy, about
eighteen;

Know what she does with him, where,
and when.

Come, sir, you put me to a woman's
madness,

The glory of a fury; and if I do not
Do 't to the height——

KING. What boy is this she raves
at?

MEG. Alas! good-minded prince, you
know not these things!

I am loth to reveal 'em. Keep this
fault,

As you would keep your health from
the hot air

Of the corrupted people, or, by Heaven,
I will not fall alone. What I have
known

Shall be as public as a print; all
tongues

Shall speak it as they do the language
they

Are born in, as free and commonly; I'll
set it,

Like a prodigious⁴⁸ star, for all to
gaze at,

And so high and glowing, that other
kingdoms far and foreign

Shall read it there, nay, travel with it,
till they find

No tongue to make it more, nor no
more people;

And then behold the fall of your fair
princess!

KING. Has she a boy?

CLE. So please your grace, I have
seen a boy wait

On her, a fair boy.

KING. Go, get you to your quarter:
For this time I will study to forget you.

MEG. Do you study to forget me,
and I'll study

To forget you.

[*Exeunt* KING, MEGRA,
and Guard.]

CLE. Why, here's a male spirit fit
for Hercules. If ever there be Nine
Worthies of women, this wench shall
ride astride and be their captain.

DION. Sure, she has a garrison of
devils in her tongue, she uttered such
balls of wild-fire. She has so nettled
the King, that all the doctors in the
country will scarce cure him. That
boy was a strange-found-out antidote
to cure her infection; that boy, that
princess' boy; that brave, chaste, vir-
tuous lady's boy; and a fair boy, a
well-spoken boy! All these considered,
can make nothing else—but there I
leave you, gentlemen.

THRA. Nay, we'll go wander with
you. [*Exeunt.*]

ACT III

SCENE I.⁴⁹

[*Enter* DION, CLEREMONT, and
THRASILINE.]

CLE. Nay, doubtless, 'tis true.

DION. Ay; and 'tis the gods

⁴⁸ portentous, ominous.

⁴⁹ The court of the palace.

That rais'd this punishment, to scourge
the King
With his own issue. Is it not a shame
For us that should write noble in the
land,
For us that should be freemen, to be-
hold

A man that is the bravery of his age,
Philaster, prest down from his royal
right

By this regardless King? and only look
And see the sceptre ready to be cast
Into the hands of that lascivious lady
That lives in lust with a smooth boy,
now to be married

To yon strange prince, who, but that
people please

To let him be a prince, is born a slave
In that which should be his most noble
part,
His mind?

THRA. That man that would not stir
with you

To aid Philaster, let the gods forget
That such a creature walks upon the
earth!

CLE. Philaster is too backward in 't
himself.

The gentry do await it, and the people,
Against their nature, are all bent for
him,

And like a field of standing corn, that's
moved

With a stiff gale, their heads bow all
one way.

DION. The only cause that draws
Philaster back

From this attempt is the fair princess'
love,

Which he admires, and we can now
confute.

THRA. Perhaps he'll not believe it.

DION. Why, gentlemen, 'tis without
question so.

CLE. Ay, 'tis past speech she lives
dishonestly.

But how shall we, if he be curious,⁵⁰
work

Upon his faith?

THRA. We all are satisfied within
ourselves.

DION. Since it is true, and tends to
his own good,

⁵⁰ scrupulous.

I'll make this new report to be my
knowledge;

I'll say I know it; nay, I'll swear I saw
it.

CLE. It will be best.

THRA. 'Twill move him.

[Enter PHILASTER.]

DION. Here he comes.
Good morrow to your honour; we have
spent

Some time in seeking you.

PHI. My worthy friends,
You that can keep your memories to
know

Your friend in miseries, and cannot
frown

On men disgrac'd for virtue, a good
day

Attend you all! What service may I
do

Worthy your acceptance?

DION. My good lord,
We come to urge that virtue, which we
know

Lives in your breast, forth. Rise, and
make a head;⁵¹

The nobles and the people are all
dull'd

With this usurping king; and not a
man,

That ever heard the word, or knew such
a thing

As virtue, but will second your at-
tempts.

PHI. How honourable is this love in
you

To me that have deserv'd none! Know,
my friends,

(You, that were born to shame your
poor Philaster

With too much courtesy,) I could afford
To melt myself in thanks: but my de-
signs

Are not yet ripe. Suffice it, that ere
long

I shall employ your loves; but yet the
time

Is short of what I would.

DION. The time is fuller, sir, than
you expect;

That which hereafter will not, perhaps,
be reach'd

⁵¹ raise an armed force.

By violence, may now be caught. As
for the King,
You know the people have long hated
him;
But now the princess, whom they
lov'd—

PHI. Why, what of her?

DION. Is loath'd as much as he.

PHI. By what strange means?

DION. She's known a whore.

PHI. Thou liest.

DION. My lord—

PHI. Thou liest,

[*Offers to draw and is held.*]

And thou shalt feel it! I had thought
thy mind

Had been of honour. Thus to rob a
lad

Of her good name is an infectious sin
Not to be pardon'd. Be it false as hell,
'Twill never be redeem'd, if it be sown
Amongst the people, fruitful to increase
All evil they shall hear. Let me alone
That I may cut off falsehood whilst it
springs!

Set hills on hills betwixt me and the
man

That utters this, and I will scale them
all,

And from the utmost top fall on his
neck,

Like thunder from a cloud.

DION. This is most strange:
Sure, he does love her.

PHI. I do love fair truth.
She is my mistress, and who injures her
Draws vengeance from me. Sirs, let
go my arms.

THRA. Nay, good my lord, be
patient.

CLE. Sir, remember this is your
honour'd friend,

That comes to do his service, and will
show you

Why he utter'd this.

PHI. I ask your pardon, sir;
My zeal to truth made me unmannerly:
Should I have heard dishonour spoke of
you,

Behind your back, untruly, I had been
As much distemper'd and enrag'd as
now.

DION. But this, my lord, is truth.

PHI. Oh, say not so!

Good sir, forbear to say so: 'tis then
truth,

That womankind is false: urge it no
more;

It is impossible. Why should you
think

The princess light?

DION. Why, she was taken at it.

PHI. 'Tis false! by Heaven, 'tis
false! It cannot be!

Can it? Speak, gentlemen; for God's
love, speak!

Is't possible? Can women all be
damn'd?

DION. Why, no, my lord.

PHI. Why, then, it cannot be.

DION. And she was taken with her
boy.

PHI. What boy?

DION. A page, a boy that serves her.

PHI. Oh, good gods!

A little boy?

DION. Ay; know you him my lord?

PHI. [*aside.*] Hell and sin know
him!—Sir, you are deceiv'd;

I'll reason it a little coldly with you.

If she were lustful, would she take a
boy,

That knows not yet desire? She would
have one

Should meet her thoughts and know
the sin he acts,

Which is the great delight of wicked-
ness.

You are abus'd,⁵² and so is she, and I.

DION. How you, my lord?

PHI. Why, all the world's abus'd
In an unjust report.

DION. Oh, noble sir, your virtues
Cannot look into the subtle thoughts of
woman!

In short, my lord, I took them; I my-
self.

PHI. Now, all the devils, thou didst!
Fly from my rage!

Would thou hadst ta'en devils engen-
d'ring plagues,

When thou did'st take them! Hide
thee from mine eyes!

Would thou hadst taken thunder on thy
breast,

When thou didst take them; or been
strucken dumb

⁵² deceived.

For ever; that this foul deed might
have slept

In silence!

THRA. Have you known him so ill-
temper'd?

CLE. Never before.

PHI. The winds that are let loose
From the four several corners of the
earth,

And spread themselves all over sea and
land,

Kiss not a chaste one. What friend
bears a sword

To run me thorough?

DION. Why, my lord, are you
So mov'd at this?

PHI. When any fall from virtue,
I am distract; I have an interest in 't.

DION. But, good my lord, recall
yourself, and think.

What's best to be done.

PHI. I thank you; I will do it.
Please you to leave me; I'll consider
of it.

To-morrow I will find your lodging
forth,

And give you answer.

DION. All the gods direct you
The readiest way!

THRA. He was extreme impatient.

CLE. It was his virtue and his noble
mind.

[*Exeunt* DION, CLEREMONT,
and THRASILINE.]

PHI. I had forgot to ask him where
he took them;

I'll follow him. Oh, that I had a sea
Within my breast, to quench the fire I
feel!

More circumstances will but fan this
fire:

It more afflicts me now, to know by
whom

This deed is done, than simply that 'tis
done;

And he that tells me this is honourable,
As far from lies as she is far from
truth.

Oh, that, like beasts, we could not
grieve ourselves

With that we see not! Bulls and rams
will fight

To keep their females standing in their
sight;

But take 'em from them, and you take
at once

Their spleens away; and they will fall
again

Unto their pastures, growing fresh and
fat,

And taste the waters of the springs as
sweet

As 'twas before, finding no start in
sleep;

But miserable man——

[*Enter* BELLARIO.]

See, see, you gods,
He walks still; and the face you let
him wear

When he was innocent is still the same,
Not blasted! Is this justice? Do you
mean

To intrap mortality, that you allow
Treason so smooth a brow? I cannot
now

Think he is guilty.

BEL. Health to you, my lord!
The princess doth commend her love,
her life,

And this, unto you. [*Gives a letter.*]

PHI. Oh, Bellario,
Now I perceive she loves me: she does
show it

In loving thee, my boy, she has made
thee brave.

BEL. My lord, she has attir'd me
past my wish,
Past my desert; more fit for her atten-
dant,

Though far unfit for me who do attend.

PHI. Thou art grown courtly, boy.

—Oh, let all women,
That love black deeds, learn to dis-
semble here,

Here, by this paper! She does write to
me

As if her heart were mines of adamant
To all the world besides; but, unto me,
A maiden-snow that melted with my
looks.—

Tell me, my boy, how doth the princess
use thee?

For I shall guess her love to me by that.

BEL. Scarce like her servant, but as
if I were

Something allied to her, or had pre-
serv'd

Her life three times by my fidelity;
 As mothers fond do use their only
 sons,
 As I'd use one that's left unto my trust,
 For whom my life should pay if he met
 harm,
 So she does use me.

PHI. Why, this is wondrous well:
 But what kind language does she feed
 thee with?

BEL. Why, she does tell me she will
 trust my youth
 With all her loving secrets, and does
 call me
 Her pretty servant; bids me weep no
 more

For leaving you; she'll see my services
 Regarded: and such words of that soft
 strain

That I am nearer weeping when she
 ends

Than ere she spake.

PHI. This is much better still.

BEL. Are you not ill, my lord?

PHI. Ill? No, Bellario.

BEL. Methinks your words

Fall not from off your tongue so evenly,
 Nor is there in your looks that quiet-
 ness

That I was wont to see.

PHI. Thou art deceiv'd, boy:
 And she strokes thy head?

BEL. Yes.

PHI. And she does clap thy cheeks?

BEL. She does, my lord.

PHI. And she does kiss thee, boy?
 ha!

BEL. How, my lord?

PHI. She kisses thee?

BEL. Never, my lord, by heaven.

PHI. That's strange, I know she
 does.

BEL. No, by my life.

PHI. Why then she does not love
 me. Come, she does.

I bade her do it; I charg'd her, by all
 charms

Of love between us, by the hope of
 peace

We should enjoy, to yield thee all de-
 lights

Naked as to her bed; I took her oath
 Thou shouldst enjoy her. Tell me,
 gentle boy,

Is she not parallelless? Is not her
 breath

Sweet as Arabian winds when fruits are
 ripe?

Are not her breasts two liquid ivory
 balls?

Is she not all a lasting mine of joy?

BEL. Ay, now I see why my dis-
 turbed thoughts

Were so perplex'd. When first I went
 to her,

My heart held augury. You are
 abus'd;

Some villain has abus'd you; I do see
 Whereto you tend. Fall rocks upon his
 head

That put this to you! 'Tis some subtle
 train

To bring that noble frame of yours to
 nought.

PHI. Thou think'st I will be angry
 with thee. Come,
 Thou shalt know all my drift. I hate
 her more

Than I love happiness, and plac'd thee
 there

To pry with narrow eyes into her deeds.
 Hast thou discovered? Is she fallen to
 lust,

As I would wish her? Speak some com-
 fort to me.

BEL. My lord, you did mistake the
 boy you sent.

Had she the lust of sparrows or of
 goats,

Had she a sin that way, hid from the
 world,

Beyond the name of lust, I would not
 aid

Her base desires; but what I came to
 know

As servant to her, I would not reveal,
 To make my life last ages.

PHI. Oh, my heart!
 This is a salve worse than the main dis-
 ease.—

Tell me thy thoughts; for I will know
 the least

That dwells within thee, or will rip thy
 heart

To know it. I will see thy thoughts as
 plain

As I do now thy face.

BEL. Why, so you do

She is (for aught I know) by all the
 gods,
 As chaste as ice! But were she foul as
 hell,
 And I did know it thus, the breath of
 kings,
 The points of swords, tortures, nor bulls
 of brass,
 Should draw it from me.

PHI. Then it is no time
 To dally with thee; I will take thy life,
 For I do hate thee. I could curse thee
 now.

BEL. If you do hate, you could not
 curse me worse;
 The gods have not a punishment in
 store
 Greater for me than is your hate.

PHI. Fie, fie,
 So young and so dissembling! Tell me
 when
 And where thou didst enjoy her, or let
 plagues

Fall on me, if I destroy thee not!

[*Draws his sword.*]

BEL. By heaven, I never did; and
 when I lie
 To save my life, may I live long and
 loath'd!

Hew me asunder, and, whilst I can
 think,

I'll love those pieces you have cut away
 Better than those that grow, and kiss
 those limbs

Because you made 'em so.

PHI. Fear'st thou not death?
 Can boys condemn that?

BEL. Oh, what boy is he
 Can be content to live to be a man,
 That sees the best of men thus passion-
 ate,

Thus without reason?

PHI. Oh, but thou dost not know
 What 'tis to die.

BEL. Yes, I do know, my lord:
 'Tis less than to be born; a lasting
 sleep;

A quiet resting from all jealousy,
 A thing we all pursue. I know, besides,
 It is but giving over a game
 That must be lost.

PHI. But there are pains, false boy,
 For perjur'd souls. Think but on those,
 and then

Thy heart will melt, and thou wilt utter
 all.

BEL. May they fall all upon me
 whilst I live,

If I be perjur'd, or have ever thought
 Of that you charge me with! If I be
 false,

Send me to suffer in those punishments
 You speak of; kill me!

PHI. Oh, what should I do?
 Why, who can but believe him? He
 does swear

So earnestly, that if it were not true,
 The gods would not endure him. Rise,
 Bellario:

Thy protestations are so deep, and thou
 Dost look so truly when thou utter'st
 them,

That, though I know 'em false as were
 my hopes,

I cannot urge thee further. But thou
 wert

To blame to injure me, for I must love
 Thy honest looks, and take no revenge
 upon

Thy tender youth. A love from me to
 thee

Is firm, whate'er thou dost; it troubles
 me

That I have call'd the blood out of thy
 cheeks,

That did so well become thee. But,
 good boy,

Let me not see thee more: something is
 done

That will distract me, that will make
 me mad,

If I behold thee. If thou tender'st me,
 Let me not see thee.

BEL. I will fly as far
 As there is morning, ere I give distaste
 To that most honour'd mind. But
 through these tears,

Shed at my hopeless parting, I can see
 A world of treason practis'd upon
 you,

And her, and me. Farewell for ever-
 more!

If you shall hear that sorrow struck me
 dead,

And after find me loyal, let there be
 A tear shed from you in my memory,
 And I shall rest in peace. [*Exit.*]

PHI. Blessing be with thee,

Whatever thou deserv'st! Oh, where
 shall I
 Go bathe this body? Nature too un-
 kind;
 That made no medicine for a troubled
 mind! [Exit.]

SCENE II.⁵³

[Enter ARETHUSA.]

ARE. I marvel my boy comes not
 back again:
 But that I know my love will question
 him
 Over and over,—how I slept, wak'd,
 talk'd,
 How I rememb'ed him when his dear
 name
 Was last spoke, and how when I sigh'd,
 wept, sung,
 And ten thousand such,—I should be
 angry at his stay.

[Enter KING.]

KING. What, at your meditations!
 Who attends you?

ARE. None but my single self. I
 need no guard;

I do no wrong, nor fear none.

KING. Tell me, have you not a boy?

ARE. Yes, sir.

KING. What kind of boy?

ARE. A page, a waiting-boy.

KING. A handsome boy?

ARE. I think he be not ugly:
 Well qualified and dutiful I know him;
 I took him not for beauty.

KING. He speaks and sings and
 plays?

ARE. Yes, sir.

KING. About eighteen?

ARE. I never ask'd his age.

KING. Is he full of service?

ARE. By your pardon, why do you
 ask?

KING. Put him away.

ARE. Sir!

KING. Put him away, I say.
 H'as done you that good service shames
 me to speak of.

ARE. Good sir, let me understand
 you.

⁵³ Arethusa's apartment in the palace.

KING. If you fear me,
 Show it in duty; put away that boy.

ARE. Let me have reason for it, sir,
 and then

Your will is my command.

KING. Do not you blush to ask it?

Cast him off,

Or I shall do the same to you. You're
 one

Shame with me, and so near unto my-
 self,

That, by my life, I dare not tell myself
 What you, myself, have done.

ARE. What have I done, my lord?

KING. 'Tis a new language, that all
 love to learn:

The common people speak it well
 already;

They need no grammar. Understand
 me well;

There be foul whispers stirring. Cast
 him off,

And suddenly. Do it! Farewell.

[Exit.]

ARE. Where may a maiden live se-
 curely free,

Keeping her honour fair? Not with the
 living.

They feed upon opinions, errors,
 dreams,

And make 'em truths; they draw a
 nourishment

Out of defamings, grow upon disgraces,
 And, when they see a virtue fortified

Strongly above the batt'ry of their
 tongues,

Oh, how they cast⁵⁴ to sink it! and,
 defeated,

(Soul-sick with poison) strike the
 monuments

Where noble names lie sleeping, till
 they sweat,

And the cold marble melt.

[Enter PHILASTER.]

PHI. Peace to your fairest thoughts,
 dearest mistress!

ARE. Oh, my dearest servant,⁵⁵ I
 have a war within me!

PHI. He must be more than man
 that makes these crystals
 Run into rivers. Sweetest fair, the
 cause?

⁵⁴ plan⁵⁵ lover.

And, as I am your slave, tied to your goodness,
 Your creature, made again from what I was
 And newly-spirited, I'll right your honour.
 ARE. Oh, my best love, that boy?
 PHI. What boy?
 ARE. The pretty boy you gave me—
 PHI. What of him?
 ARE. Must be no more mine.
 PHI. Why?
 ARE. They are jealous of him.
 PHI. Jealous! Who?
 ARE. The King.
 PHI. [*aside.*] Oh, my misfortune!
 Then 'tis no idle jealousy.—Let him go.
 ARE. Oh, cruel!
 Are you hard-hearted too? Who shall now tell you
 How much I lov'd you? Who shall swear it to you,
 And weep the tears I send? Who shall now bring you
 Letters, rings, bracelets? Lose his health in service?
 Wake tedious nights in stories of your praise?
 Who shall now sing your crying elegies,
 And strike a sad soul into senseless pictures,
 And make them mourn? Who shall take up his lute,
 And touch it till he crown a silent sleep
 Upon my eye-lids, making me dream, and cry,
 "Oh, my dear, dear Philaster!"
 PHI. [*aside.*] Oh, my heart!
 Would he had broken thee, that made me know
 This lady was not loyal!—Mistress,
 Forget the boy; I'll get thee a far better.
 ARE. Oh, never, never such a boy again
 As my Bellario!
 PHI. 'Tis but your fond affection.
 ARE. With thee, my boy, farewell for ever
 All secrecy in servants! Farewell, faith,

And all desire to do well for itself!
 Let all that shall succeed thee for thy wrongs
 Sell and betray chaste love!
 PHI. And all this passion for a boy?
 ARE. He was your boy, and you put him to me,
 And the loss of such must have a mourning for.
 PHI. Oh, thou forgetful woman!
 ARE. How, my lord?
 PHI. False Arethusa!
 Hast thou a medicine to restore my wits,
 When I have lost 'em? If not, leave to talk,
 And do thus.
 ARE. Do what, sir? Would you sleep?
 PHI. For ever, Arethusa. Oh, you gods,
 Give me a worthy patience! Have I stood,
 Naked, alone, the shock of many fortunes?
 Have I seen mischiefs numberless and mighty
 Grow like a sea upon me? Have I taken
 Danger as stern as death into my bosom,
 And laught upon it, made it but a mirth,
 And flung it by? Do I live now like him,
 Under this tyrant King, that languishing
 Hears his sad bell and sees his mourners? Do I
 Bear all this bravely, and must sink at length
 Under a woman's falsehood? Oh, that boy,
 That cursed boy! None but a villain boy
 To ease your lust?
 ARE. Nay, then, I am betrayed:
 I feel the plot cast for my overthrow.
 Oh, I am wretched!
 PHI. Now you may take that little right I have
 To this poor kingdom. Give it to your joy;

For I have no joy in it. Some far
 place,
 Where never womankind durst set her
 foot
 For ⁵⁶ bursting with her poisons, must
 I seek,
 And live to curse you;
 There dig a cave, and preach to birds
 and beasts
 What woman is, and help to save them
 from you;
 How heaven is in your eyes, but in
 your hearts
 More hell than hell has; how your
 tongues, like scorpions,
 Both heal and poison;⁵⁷ how your
 thoughts are woven
 With thousand changes in one subtle
 web,
 And worn so by you; how that foolish
 man,
 That reads the story of a woman's
 face
 And dies believing it, is lost for ever;
 How all the good you have is but a
 shadow,
 I' the morning with you, and at night
 behind you,
 Past and forgotten; how your vows are
 frosts,
 Fast for a night, and with the next sun
 gone;
 How you are, being taken all together.
 A mere confusion, and so dead a chaos,
 That love cannot distinguish. These
 sad texts,
 Till my last hour, I am bound to utter
 of you.
 So, farewell all my woe, all my de-
 light! [Exit.]
 ARE. Be merciful, ye gods, and
 strike me dead!
 What way have I deserv'd this? Make
 my breast
 Transparent as pure crystall, that the
 world,
 Jealous of me, may see the foulest
 thought
 My heart holds. Where shall a woman
 turn her eyes,
 To find out constancy?

[Enter BELLARIO.]

Save me, how black
 And guiltily, methinks, that boy looks
 now!
 Oh, thou dissembler, that, before thou
 spok'st,
 Wert in thy cradle false, sent to make
 lies
 And betray innocents! Thy lord and
 thou
 May glory in the ashes of a maid
 Fool'd by her passion; but the conquest
 is
 Nothing so great as wicked. Fly away!
 Let my command force thee to that
 which shame
 Would do without it. If thou under-
 stood'st
 The loathèd office thou hast undergone.
 Why, thou wouldst hide thee under
 heaps of hills,
 Lest men should dig and find thee.
 BEL. Oh, what god,
 Angry with men, hath sent this strange
 disease
 Into the noblest minds! Madam, this
 grief
 You add unto me is no more than drops
 To seas, for which they are not seen to
 swell.
 My lord hath struck his anger through
 my heart,
 And let out all the hope of future
 joys.
 You need not bid me fly; I came to
 part,
 To take my latest leave. Farewell for
 ever!
 I durst not run away in honesty
 From such a lady, like a boy that stole
 Or made some grievous fault. The
 power of gods
 Assist you in your sufferings! Hasty
 time
 Reveal the truth to your abusèd lord
 And mine, that he may know your
 worth; whilst I
 Go seek out some forgotten place to
 die! [Exit.]
 ARE. Peace guide thee! Thou hast
 overthrown me once;
 Yet, if I had another Troy to lose,
 Thou, or another villain with thy looks,

⁵⁶ for fear of.

⁵⁷ It was believed that scorpions, applied to
 the wound they made, cured it.

Might talk me out of it, and send me naked,
My hair dishevell'd, through the fiery streets.

[Enter a LADY.]

LADY. Madam, the King would hunt, and calls for you
With earnestness.

ARE. I am in tune to hunt!
Diana, if thou canst rage with a maid
As with a man,⁵⁸ let me discover thee
Bathing, and turn me to a fearful hind,
That I may die pursued by cruel hounds,
And have my story written in my wounds! [Exeunt.]

ACT IV

SCENE I.⁵⁹

[Enter KING, PHARAMOND, ARETHUSA, GALATEA, MEGRA, DION, CLEREMONT, THRASILINE, and Attendants.]

KING. What, are the hounds before and all the woodmen?

Our horses ready and our bows bent?

DION. All, sir.

KING. [to PHARAMOND.] You are cloudy, sir. Come, we have forgotten

Your venial trespass; let not that sit heavy

Upon your spirit; here's none dare utter it.

DION. He looks like an old surfeited stallion, dull as a dormouse. See how he sinks! The wench has shot him between wind and water, and, I hope, sprung a leak.

THRA. He needs no teaching, he strikes sure enough. His greatest fault is, he hunts too much in the purlieus; would he would leave off poaching!

DION. And for his horn, h'as left it at the lodge where he lay late. Oh, he's a precious limehound!⁶⁰ Turn him

loose upon the pursuit of a lady, and if he lose her, hang him up i' the slip. When my fox-bitch Beauty grows proud, I'll borrow him.

KING. Is your boy turn'd away?

ARE. You did command, sir, and I obey'd you.

KING. 'Tis well done. Hark ye further. [They talk apart.]

CLE. Is't possible this fellow should repent? Methinks, that were not noble in him; and yet he looks like a mortified member, as if he had a sick man's salve⁶¹ in 's mouth. If a worse man had done this fault now, some physical⁶² justice or other would presently (without the help of an almanack⁶³) have opened the obstructions of his liver, and let him blood with a dog-whip.

DION. See, see how modestly yon lady looks, as if she came from churching with her neighbours! Why, what a devil can a man see in her face but that she's honest!⁶⁴

THRA. Faith, no great matter to speak of; a foolish twinkling with the eye, that spoils her coat; ⁶⁵ but he must be a cunning herald that finds it.

DION. See how they muster one another! Oh, there's a rank regiment where the devil carries the colours and his dam drum-major! Now the world and the flesh come behind with the carriage.⁶⁶

CLE. Sure this lady has a good turn done her against her will; before she was common talk, now none dare say cantharides⁶⁷ can stir her. Her face looks like a warrant, willing and commanding all tongues, as they will answer it, to be tied up and bolted when this lady means to let herself lose. As I live, she has got her a goodly protection and a gracious; and may use her body discreetly for her health's sake,

⁵⁸ an allusion to a religious work, Thomas Bacon's *The Sicke Man's Salve*, 1561.

⁵⁹ acting as a doctor.

⁶⁰ Almanacs gave the proper seasons for blood-letting.

⁶¹ chaste.

⁶² Coat of arms. Mason explains that the reference is to the introduction of stars into a coat of arms, denoting a younger branch.

⁶³ baggage.

⁶⁴ Spanish fly, used as a provocative.

⁵⁸ Actaeon. ⁵⁹ Before the palace.

⁶⁰ a hunting dog. Lyme = leash.

once a week, excepting Lent and dog-days. Oh, if they were to be got for money, what a great sum would come out of the city for these licences!

KING. To horse, to horse! we lose the morning, gentlemen. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.⁶⁸

[*Enter two WOODMEN.*]

1 WOOD. What, have you lodged the deer?

2 WOOD. Yes, they are ready for the bow.

1 WOOD. Who shoots?

2 WOOD. The princess.

1 WOOD. No, she'll hunt.

2 WOOD. She'll take a stand, I say.

1 WOOD. Who else?

2 WOOD. Why, the young stranger-prince.

1 WOOD. He shall shoot in a stone-bow⁶⁹ for me. I never lov'd his beyond-sea-ship since he forsook the say,⁷⁰ for paying ten shillings. He was there at the fall of a deer, and would needs (out of his mightiness) give ten groats for the dowcets; marry, his steward would have the velvet-head⁷¹ into the bargain, to turf⁷² his hat withal. I think he should love ventry; he is an old Sir Tristrem; for, if you be rememb' red, he forsook the stag once to strike a rascal⁷³ miching⁷⁴ in a meadow, and her he kill'd in the eye. Who shoots else?

2 WOOD. The Lady Galatea.

1 WOOD. That's a good wench, an she would not chide us for tumbling of her women in the brakes. She's liberal, and by the Gods, they say she's honest, and whether that be a fault, I have nothing to do. There's all?

2 WOOD. No, one more; Megra.

1 WOOD. That's a firker,⁷⁵ i' faith,

⁶⁸ A forest.

⁶⁹ with a cross-bow for shooting stones.

⁷⁰ the assay or slitting of the deer, in order to test the quality of the flesh, which involved a fee to the keeper.

⁷¹ the hart's horns, which are covered with velvet pile when new.

⁷² re-cover.

⁷³ creeping stealthily.

⁷⁴ a lean doe.

⁷⁵ a fast one.

boy. There's a wench will ride her haunches as hard after a kennel of hounds as a hunting saddle, and when she comes home, get 'em clapt, and all is well again. I have known her lose herself three times in one afternoon (if the woods have been answerable),⁷⁶ and it has been work enough for one man to find her, and he has sweat for it. She rides well and she pays well. Hark! let's go. [*Exeunt.*]

[*Enter PHILASTER.*]

PHI. Oh, that I had been nourish'd in these woods
With milk of goats and acorns, and not known
The right of crowns nor the dissembling trains
Of women's looks; but digg'd myself a cave
Where I, my fire, my cattle, and my bed,
Might have been shut together in one shed;
And then had taken me some mountain-girl,
Beaten with winds, chaste as the hard'ned rocks
Whereon she dwelt, that might have strewed my bed
With leaves and reeds, and with the skins of beasts,
Our neighbours, and have borne at her big breasts
My large coarse issue! This had been a life
Free from vexation.

[*Enter BELLARIO.*]

BEL. Oh, wicked men!
An innocent may walk safe among beasts;
Nothing assaults me here. See, my griev'd lord
Sits as his soul were searching out a way
To leave his body!—Pardon me, that must
Break thy last commandment; for I must speak.
You that are griev'd can pity; hear, my lord!

⁷⁶ suitable.

PHI. Is there a creature yet so miserable,
That I can pity?

BEL. Oh, my noble lord,
View my strange fortune, and bestow
on me,
According to your bounty (if my
service
Can merit nothing), so much as may
serve

To keep that little piece I hold of life
From cold and hunger!

PHI. Is it thou? Be gone!
Go, sell those misbeseeming clothes
thou wear'st,
And feed thyself with them.

BEL. Alas, my lord, I can get nothing
for them!
The silly country-people think 'tis
treason

To touch such gay things.

PHI. Now, by the gods, this is
Unkindly done, to vex me with thy
sight.

Thou 'rt fallen again to thy dissembling
trade:

How shouldst thou think to cozen me
again?

Remains there yet a plague untried for
me?

Even so thou wept'st, and lookt'st, and
spok'st when first

I took thee up.

Curse on the time! If thy commanding
tears

Can work on any other, use thy art;
I'll not betray it. Which way wilt thou
take,

That I may shun thee, for thine eyes
are poison

To mine, and I am loth to grow in
rage?

This way, or that way?

BEL. Any will serve; but I will
choose to have

That path in chase that leads unto my
grave. *[Exeunt severally.]*

*[Enter, on one side, DION, and on
the other the two WOODMEN.]*

DION. This is the strangest sudden
chance!—You, woodmen!

1 WOOD. My lord Dion?

DION. Saw you a lady come this
way on a sable horse studded
with stars of white?

2 WOOD. Was she not young and
tall?

DION. Yes. Rode she to the wood
or to the plain?

2 WOOD. Faith, my lord, we saw
none. *[Exeunt WOODMEN.]*

DION. Pox of your questions then!

[Enter CLEREMONT.]

What, is she found?

CLE. Nor will be, I think.

DION. Let him seek his daughter
himself. She cannot stray about a
little necessary natural business, but
the whole court must be in arms.
When she has done, we shall have
peace.

CLE. There's already a thousand
fatherless tales amongst us. Some say,
her horse ran away with her; some, a
wolf pursued her; others, 'twas a plot
to kill her, and that arm'd men were
seen in the wood: but questionless she
rode away willingly.

[Enter KING and THRASILINE.]

KING. Where is she?

CLE. Sir, I cannot tell.

KING. How's that?

Answer me so again!

CLE. Sir, shall I lie?

KING. Yes, lie and damn, rather
than tell me that.

I say again, where is she? Mutter
not!—

Sir, speak you; where is she?

DION. Sir, I do not know.

KING. Speak that again so boldly,
and, by Heaven,

It is thy last!—You, fellows, answer
me;

Where is she? Mark me, all; I am
your king:

I wish to see my daughter; show her
me;

I do command you all, as you are sub-
jects,

To show her me! What! am I not your
king?

If ay, then am I not to be obeyed?

DION. Yes, if you command things possible and honest.

KING. Things possible and honest!

Hear me, thou,—

Thou traitor, that dar'st confine thy King to things

Possible and honest! Show her me,

Or, let me perish, if I cover not

All Sicily with blood!

DION. Faith, I cannot,
Unless you tell me where she is.

KING. You have betray'd me; you have let me lose

The jewel of my life. Go, bring her to me,

And set her here before me. 'Tis the king

Will have it so; whose breath can still the winds,

UncLOUD the sun, charm down the swelling sea,

And stop the floods of heaven. Speak, can it not?

DION. No.

KING. No! cannot the breath of kings do this?

DION. No; nor smell sweet itself, if once the lungs

Be but corrupted.

KING. Is it so? Take heed!

DION. Sir, take you heed how you dare the powers

That must be just.

KING. Alas! what are we kings!

Why do you gods place us above the rest,

To be serv'd, flatter'd, and ador'd, till we

Believe we hold within our hands your thunder?

And when we come to try the power we have,

There's not a leaf shakes at our threat'nings.

I have sinn'd, 'tis true, and here stand to be punish'd;

Yet would not thus be punish'd. Let me choose

My way, and lay it on!

DION. [*aside.*] He articles with the gods. Would somebody would draw bonds for the performance of covenants betwixt them!

[*Enter PHARAMOND, GALATEA, and MEGRA.*]

KING. What, is she found?

PHI. No; we have ta'en her horse; He gallopt empty by. There is some treason.

You, Galatea, rode with her into the wood;

Why left you her?

GAL. She did command me.

KING. Command! you should not.

GAL. 'Twould ill become my fortunes and my birth

To disobey the daughter of my king

KING. You're all cunning to obey us for our hurt;

But I will have her.

PHA. If I have her not,
By this hand, there shall be no more Sicily.

DION. [*aside.*] What, will he carry it to Spain in 's pocket?

PHA. I will not leave one man alive, but the king,

A cook, and a tailor.

DION. [*aside.*] Yes; you may do well to spare your lady-bedfellow; and her you may keep for a spawner.

KING. [*aside.*] I see the injuries I have done must be reveng'd.

DION. Sir, this is not the way to find her out.

KING. Run all, disperse yourselves. The man that finds her,

Or (if she be kill'd) the traitor, I'll make him great.

DION. I know some would give five thousand pounds to find her.

PHA. Come, let us seek.

KING. Each man a several way; here I myself.

DION. Come, gentlemen, we here.

CLE. Lady, you must go search too.

MEG. I had rather be search'd myself. [*Exeunt severally.*]

SCENE III."

[*Enter ARETHUSA.*]

ARE. Where am I now? Feet, find me out a way,

" Another part of the forest.

Without the counsel of my troubled head.
I'll follow you boldly about these woods,
O'er mountains, thorough brambles, pits, and floods.
Heaven, I hope, will ease me: I am sick. [Sits down.]

[Enter BELLARIO.]

BEL. [aside.] Yonder's my lady.
God knows I want nothing,
Because I do not wish to live; yet I
Will try her charity.—Oh hear, you have plenty!
From that flowing store drop some on dry ground.—See,
The lively red is gone to guard her heart!
I fear she faints.—Madam, look up!—
She breathes not.—
Open once more those rosy twins, and send
Unto my lord your latest farewell!—
Oh, she stirs.—

How is it, Madam? Speak comfort.
ARE. 'Tis not gently done,
To put me in a miserable life,
And hold me there. I prithee, let me go;
I shall do best without thee; I am well.

[Enter PHILASTER.]

PHI. I am to blame to be so much in rage.
I'll tell her coolly when and where I heard
This killing truth. I will be temperate
In speaking, and as just in hearing.—
Oh, monstrous! Tempt me not, you gods! good gods,
Tempt not a frail man! What's he, that has a heart,
But he must ease it here!

BEL. My lord, help, help! The princess!

ARE. I am well: forbear.

PHI. [aside.] Let me love lightning,
let me be embrac'd
And kist by scorpions, or adore the eyes
Of basilisks, rather than trust the tongues

Of hell-bred women! Some good god look down,
And shrink these veins up! Stick me here a stone,
Lasting to ages in the memory
Of this damn'd act!—Hear me, you wicked ones!
You have put hills of fire into this breast,
Not to be quench'd with tears; for which may guilt
Sit on your bosoms! At your meals and beds
Despair await you! What, before my face?

Poison of asps between your lips! Diseases

Be your best issues! Nature make a curse,

And throw it on you!

ARE. Dear Philaster, leave
To be enrag'd, and hear me.

PHI. I have done;
Forgive my passion. Not the calm'd sea,

When Aeolus locks up his windy brood,
Is less disturb'd than I. I'll make you know 't.

Dear Arethusa, do but take this sword,
[Offers his drawn sword.]

And search how temperate a heart I have;

Then you and this your boy may live and reign

In lust without control.—Wilt thou, Bellario?

I prithee kill me; thou art poor, and may'st

Nourish ambitious thoughts; when I am dead,

Thy way were freer. Am I raging now?

If I were mad, I should desire to live.
Sirs,⁷⁸ feel my pulse, whether you have known

A man in a more equal tune to die.

BEL. Alas, my lord, your pulse keeps madman's time!

So does your tongue.

PHI. You will not kill me, then?

ARE. Kill you!

BEL. Not for the world.

PHI. I blame not thee,

⁷⁸ formerly used to women as well as to men.

Bellario; thou hast done but that which
 gods
 Would have transform'd themselves to
 do. Be gone,
 Leave me without reply; this is the last
 Of all our meetings—

[Exit BELLARIO.]

Kill me with this sword;
 Be wise, or worse will follow: we are
 two
 Earth cannot bear at once. Resolve
 to do,
 Or suffer.

ARE. If my fortune be so good to
 let me fall
 Upon thy hand, I shall have peace in
 death.
 Yet tell me this, will there be no
 slanders,
 No jealousy in the other world; no ill
 there?

PHI. No.

ARE. Show me, then, the way.

PHI. Then guide my feeble hand,
 You that have power to do it, for I
 must
 Perform a piece of justice!—If your
 youth
 Have any way offended Heaven, let
 prayers
 Short and effectual reconcile you to it.
 ARE. I am prepared.

[Enter a COUNTRY FELLOW.]

C. FELL. I'll see the King, if he be
 in the forest; I have hunted him these
 two hours. If I should come home and
 not see him, my sisters would laugh at
 me. I can see nothing but people bet-
 ter hors'd than myself, that outride me;
 I can hear nothing but shouting. These
 kings had need of good brains; this
 whooping is able to put a mean man
 out of his wits. There's a courtier with
 his sword drawn; by this hand, upon a
 woman, I think!

PHI. Are you at peace?

ARE. With heaven and earth.

PHI. May they divide thy soul and
 body! [Wounds her.]

C. FELL. Hold, dastard! strike a
 woman! Thou'rt a craven. I warrant
 thee, thou wouldst be loth to play half

a dozen venies⁷⁹ at wasters⁸⁰ with a
 good fellow for a broken head.

PHI. Leave us, good friend,

ARE. What ill-bred man art thou,
 to intrude thyself

Upon our private sports, our recrea-
 tion?

C. FELL. God 'uds⁸¹ me, I under-
 stand you not; but

I know the rogue has hurt you.

PHI. Pursue thy own affairs: it will
 be ill

To multiply blood upon my head;
 which thou

Wilt force me to.

C. FELL. I know not your rhetoric;
 but I can lay it on, if you touch the
 woman.

PHI. Slave, take what thou de-
 servest! [They fight.]

ARE. Heavens guard my lord!

C. FELL. Oh, do you breathe?

PHI. I hear the tread of people. I
 am hurt.

The gods take part against me: could
 this boor

Have held me thus else? I must shift
 for life,

Though I hear to loathe it. I would find a
 course

To lose it rather by my will than force.
 [Exit.]

C. FELL. I cannot follow the rogue.
 I pray thee, wench, come and kiss me
 now.

[Enter PHARAMOND, DION, CLERE-
 MONT, THRASILINE, and WOOD-
 MEN.]

PHA. What art thou?

C. FELL. Almost killed I am for a
 foolish woman; a knave has hurt
 her.

PHA. The princess, gentlemen!—
 Where's the wound, madam! Is it dan-
 gerous?

ARE. He has not hurt me.

C. FELL. By God, she lies; h'as hurt
 her in the breast;

Look else.

PHA. O sacred spring of innocent
 blood!

⁷⁹ bouts.

⁸⁰ cudgels.

⁸¹ God-judge.

DION. 'Tis above wonder! Who should dare this?

ARE. I felt it not.

PHA. Speak, villain, who has hurt the princess?

C. FELL. Is it the princess?

DION. Ay.

C. FELL. Then I have seen something yet.

PHA. But who has hurt her?

C. FELL. I told you, a rogue; I ne'er saw him before, I.

PHA. Madam, who did it?

ARE. Some dishonest wretch; Alas, I know him not, and do forgive him!

C. FELL. He's hurt too; he cannot go far;

I made my father's old fox ⁸² fly about his ears.

PHA. How will you have me kill him?

ARE. Not at all; 'tis some distracted fellow.

PHA. By this hand, I'll leave ne'er a piece of him bigger than a nut, and bring him all to you in my hat.

ARE. Nay, good sir, If you do take him, bring him quick ⁸³ to me,

And I will study for a punishment Great as his fault.

PHA. I will.

ARE. But swear.

PHA. By all my love, I will.— Woodmen, conduct the princess to the King, And bear that wounded fellow to dressing.—

Come, gentlemen, we'll follow the chase close.

[*Exeunt on one side PHARAMOND, DION, CLEREMONT, and THRASILINE; exit on the other ARETHUSA attended by one WOODMAN.*]

C. FELL. I pray you, friend, let me see the King.

2 WOOD. That you shall, and receive thanks.

C. FELL. If I get clear with this, I'll go see no more gay sights. [*Exeunt.*]

⁸² broadsword.

⁸³ alive.

SCENE IV.⁸⁴

[*Enter BELLARIO.*]

BEL. A heaviness near death sits on my brow,
And I must sleep. Bear me, thou gentle bank,

For ever, if thou wilt. You sweet ones all, [*lies down*]

Let me unworthy press you; I could wish

I rather were a corse strew'd o'er with you

Than quick above you. Dulness ⁸⁵ shuts mine eyes,

And I am giddy: oh, that I could take So sound a sleep that I might never wake! [*Sleeps.*]

[*Enter PHILASTER.*]

PHI. I have done ill; my conscience calls me false

To strike at her that would not strike at me.

When I did fight, methought I heard her pray

The gods to guard me. She may be abus'd,

And I a loathèd villain; if she be, She will conceal who hurt her. He has wounds

And cannot follow; neither knows he me.

Who's this? Bellario sleeping! If thou be'st

Guilty, there is no justice that thy sleep Should be so sound; and mine, whom thou hast wrong'd,

So broken. [*cry within.*] Hark! I am pursued. You gods

I'll take this offer'd means of my escape.

They have no mark to know me but my blood,

If she be true; if false, let mischief light

On all the world at once! Sword, print my wounds

Upon this sleeping boy! I ha' none, I think,

Are mortal, nor would I lay greater on thee. [*Wounds BELLARIO.*]

⁸⁴ Another part of the forest.

⁸⁵ sleepiness.

BEL. Oh, death, I hope, is come!
Blest be that hand!
It meant me well. Again, for pity's sake!

PHI. I have caught myself; [*falls*]
The loss of blood hath stay'd my flight.
Here, here,
Is he that struck thee: take thy full revenge;
Use me, as I did mean thee, worse than death;
I'll teach thee to revenge. This luckless hand

Wounded the princess; tell my followers⁸⁶
Thou didst receive these hurts in staying me,
And I will second thee; get a reward.

BEL. Fly, fly, my lord, and save yourself!

PHI. How's this?
Wouldst thou I should be safe?

BEL. Else were it vain
For me to live. These little wounds I have
Ha' not bled much. Reach me that noble hand;
I'll help to cover you.

PHI. Art thou then true to me?

BEL. Or let me perish loath'd!
Come, my good lord,
Creep in amongst those bushes; who does know
But that the gods may save your much-lov'd breath?

PHI. Then I shall die for grief, if not for this,
That I have wounded thee. What wilt thou do?

BEL. Shift for myself well. Peace!
I hear 'em come.

[*PHILASTER creeps into a bush.*]

[*Voices within.*] Follow, follow, follow! that way they went.

BEL. With my own wounds I'll bloody my own sword.
I need not counterfeit to fall; Heaven knows
That I can stand no longer. [*Falls.*]

[*Enter PHARAMOND, DION, CLEREMONT, and THRASILINE.*]

PHA. To this place we have trackt him by his blood.

CLE. Yonder, my lord, creeps one away.

DION. Stay, sir! what are you?

BEL. A wretched creature, wounded in these woods
By beasts. Relieve me, if your names be men,
Or I shall perish.

DION. This is he, my lord,
Upon my soul, that hurt her. 'Tis the boy.

That wicked boy, that serv'd her.

PHA. Oh, thou damn'd
In thy creation! What cause couldst thou shape

To hurt the princess?

BEL. Then I am betrayed.

DION. Betrayed! No, apprehended.

BEL. I confess,
(Urge it no more) that, big with evil thoughts,

I set upon her, and did make my aim
Her death. For charity let fall at once
The punishment you mean, and do not load

This weary flesh with tortures.

PHA. I will know
Who hir'd thee to this deed.

BEL. Mine own revenge.

PHA. Revenge! for what?

BEL. It pleas'd her to receive
Me as her page and, when my fortunes ebb'd,

That men strid o'er them careless, she did shower

Her welcome graces on me, and did swell

My fortunes till they overflow'd their banks,

Threat'ning the men that crost 'em;
when, as swift

As storms arise at sea, she turn'd her eyes

To burning suns upon me, and did dry
The streams she had bestow'd, leaving me worse

And more contemn'd than other little brooks,

Because I had been great. In short, I knew

I could not live, and therefore did desire

⁸⁶ pursuers.

To die reveng'd.

PH. If tortures can be found
Long as thy natural life, resolve to feel
The utmost rigour.

[PHILASTER *creeps out of the bush.*]

CLE. Help to lead him
hence.

PHI. Turn back, you ravishers of
innocence!
Know ye the price of that you bear
away
So rudely?

PHA. Who's that?

DION. 'Tis the Lord Philaster.

PHI. 'Tis not the treasure of all
kings in one,
The wealth of Tagus, nor the rocks of
pearl

That pave the court of Neptune, can
weigh down

That virtue. It was I that hurt the
princess.

Place me, some god, upon a pyramis⁸⁷
Higher than hills of earth, and lend a
voice

Loud as your thunder to me, that from
hence

I may discourse to all the under-world
The worth that dwells in him!

PHA. How's this?

BEL. My lord, some man
Weary of life, that would be glad to
die.

PHI. Leave these untimely cour-
tesies, Bellario.

BEL. Alas, he's mad! Come, will
you lead me on?

PHI. By all the oaths that men
ought most to keep,
And gods to punish most when men
do break,

He touch'd her not.—Take heed, Bel-
lario,

How thou dost drown the virtues thou
hast shown

With perjury.—By all that's good,
'twas I!

You know she stood betwixt me and
my right.

PHA. Thy own tongue be thy
judge!

CLE. It was Philaster.

DION. Is 't not a brave boy?

⁸⁷ pyramid.

Well, sirs, I fear me we were all de-
ceived.

PHI. Have I no friend here?

DION. Yes.

PHI. Then show it: some
Good body lend a hand to draw us
nearer.

Would you have tears shed for you
when you die?

Then lay me gently on his neck, that
there

I may weep floods and breathe forth
my spirit.

'Tis not the wealth of Plutus, nor the
gold [*embraces BELLARIO*]

Lockt in the heart of earth, can buy
away

This arm-full from me; this had been
a ransom

To have redeem'd the great Augustus
Cæsar,

Had he been taken. You hard-hearted
men,

More stony than these mountains, can
you see

Such clear pure blood drop, and not cut
your flesh

To stop his life, to bind whose bitter
wounds,

Queens ought to tear their hair, and
with their tears

Bathe 'em?—Forgive me, thou that art
the wealth

Of poor Philaster!

[*Enter KING, ARETHUSA, and Guard.*]

KING. Is the villain ta'en?

PHA. Sir, here be two confess the
deed; but sure

It was Philaster.

PHI. Question it no more;
It was.

KING. The fellow that did fight with
him,

Will tell us that.

ARE. Aye me! I know he will.

KING. Did not you know him?

ARE. Sir, if it was he,
He was disguis'd.

PHI. I was so.—Oh, my stars,
That I should live still. [*Aside.*]

KING. Thou ambitious fool,
Thou that hast laid a train for thy own
life!—

Now I do mean to do, I'll leave to talk.
Bear them to prison.

ARE. Sir, they did plot together to
take hence

This harmless life; should it pass un-
reveng'd,

I should to earth go weeping. Grant
me, then,

By all the love a father bears his child,
Their custodies, and that I may ap-
point

Their tortures and their deaths.

DION. Death! oft; our law will not
reach that for this fault.

KING. 'Tis granted; take 'em to you
with a guard.—

Come, princely Pharamond, this busi-
ness past,

We may with security go on

To your intended match.

[*Exeunt all except DION, CLERE-
MONT, and THRASILINE.*]

CLE. I pray that this action lose not
Philaster the hearts of the people.

DION. Fear it not; their over-wise
heads will think it but a trick.

[*Exeunt.*]

ACT V

SCENE I.⁸⁸

[*Enter DION, CLEREMONT, and
THRASILINE.*]

THRA. Has the King sent for him to
death?

DION. Yes; but the King must know
'tis not in his power to war with
Heaven.

CLE. We linger time; the King sent
for Philaster and the headsman an hour
ago.

THRA. Are all his wounds well?

DION. All; they were but scratches;
but the loss of blood made him
faint.

CLE. We dally, gentlemen.

THRA. Away!

DION. We'll scuffle hard before we
perish.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.⁸⁹

[*Enter PHILASTER, ARETHUSA, and
BELLARIO.*]

ARE. Nay, faith, Philaster, grieve
not; we are well.

BEL. Nay, good my lord, forbear;
we're wondrous well.

PHI. Oh, Arethusa, oh, Bellario,
Leave to be kind!

I shall be shut from Heaven, as now
from earth,

If you continue so. I am a man
False to a pair of the most trusty ones
That ever earth bore; can it bear us
all?

Forgive, and leave me. But the King
hath sent

To call me to my death: oh, shew it
me,

And then forget me! And for thee,
my boy,

I shall deliver words will mollify
The hearts of beasts to spare thy inno-
cence.

BEL. Alas, my lord, my life is not a
thing.

Worthy your noble thoughts! 'Tis not
a life,

'Tis but a piece of childhood thrown
away.

Should I outlive you, I should then out-
live

Virtue and honour; and when that day
comes,

If ever I shall close these eyes but once,
May I live spotted for my perjury,
And waste my limbs to nothing!

ARE. And I (the woful'st maid that
ever was,

Forc'd with my hands to bring my lord
to death)

Do by the honour of a virgin swear
To tell no hours beyond it!

PHI. Make me not hated so.

ARE. Come from this prison all joy-
ful to our deaths!

PHI. People will tear me, when they
find you true

To such a wretch as I; I shall die
loath'd.

Enjoy your kingdoms peaceably, whilst I
For ever sleep forgotten with my faults.

⁸⁸ Before the palace.

⁸⁹ A prison.

Every just servant, every maid in love,
Will have a piece of me, if you be true.

ARE. My dear lord, say not so.

BEL. A piece of you!
He was not born of woman that can cut
It and look on.

PHI. Take me in tears betwixt you,
for my heart
Will break with shame and sorrow.

ARE. Why, 'tis well.

BEL. Lament no more.

PHI. Why, what would you have
done
If you had wrong'd me basely, and had
found

Your life no price compar'd to mine? ⁹⁰

For love, sirs,

Deal with me truly.

BEL. 'Twas mistaken, sir.

PHI. Why, if it were?

BEL. Then, sir, we would have
ask'd

You pardon.

PHI. And have hope to enjoy it?

ARE. Enjoy it! ay.

PHI. Would you indeed? Be plain.

BEL. We would, my lord.

PHI. Forgive me, then.

ARE. So, so.

BEL. 'Tis as it should be now.

PHI. Lead to my death.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.⁹¹

[*Enter KING, DION, CLEREMONT,
THRASILINE, and Attendants.*]

KING. Gentlemen, who saw the
prince?

CLE. So please you, sir, he's gone to
see the city

And the new platform, with some gen-
tlemen

Attending on him.

KING. Is the princess ready
To bring her prisoner out?

THRA. She waits your grace.

KING. Tell her we stay.

[*Exit THRASILINE.*]

DION. [*aside.*] King, you may be
deceiv'd yet.

⁹⁰ Mason conj. Qq. F. *my . . . yours.*

⁹¹ A state-room in the palace.

The head you aim at cost more setting
on

Than to be lost so lightly. If it must
off,—

Like a wild overflow, that swoops be-
fore him

A golden stack, and with it shakes
down bridges,

Cracks the strong hearts of pines,
whose cable-roots

Held out a thousand storms, a thou-
sand thunders,

And, so made mightier, takes whole
villages

Upon his back, and in that heat of
pride

Charges strong towns, towers, castles,
palaces,

And lays them desolate; so shall thy
head,

Thy noble head, bury the lives of thou-
sands,

That must bleed with thee like a
sacrifice,

In thy red ruins.

[*Enter ARETHUSA, PHILASTER,
BELLARIO in a robe and garland,
and THRASILINE.*]

KING. How now? What masque is
this?

BEL. Right royal sir, I should
Sing you an epithalamion of these
lovers,

But having lost my best airs with my
fortunes,

And wanting a celestial harp to
strike

This blessed union on, thus in glad
story

I give you all. These two fair cedar-
branches,

The noblest of the mountain where
they grew,

Straightest and tallest, under whose
still shades

The worthier beasts have made their
lairs, and slept

Free from the fervour of the Sirian
star

And the fell thunder-stroke, free from
the clouds

When they were big with humour, and
deliver'd

In thousand spouts their issues to the earth;
 Oh, there was none but silent quiet there!
 Till never-pleasèd Fortune shot up shrubs,
 Base under-brambles, to divorce these branches;
 And for a while they did so, and did reign
 Over the mountain, and choke up his beauty
 With brakes, rude thorns and thistles, till the sun
 Scorcht them even to the roots and dried them there.
 And now a gentle gale hath blown again,
 That made these branches meet and twine together,
 Never to be divided. The god that sings
 His holy numbers over marriage-beds
 Hath knit their noble hearts; and here they stand
 Your children, mighty King; and I have done.

KING. How, how?

ARE. Sir, if you love it in plain truth,
 (For now there is no masquing in 't,) this gentleman,
 The prisoner that you gave me, is become
 My keeper, and through all the bitter throes
 Your jealousies and his ill fate have wrought him,
 Thus nobly hath he struggled, and at length
 Arrived here my dear husband.

KING. Your dear husband!—
 Call in the Captain of the Citadel—
 There you shall keep your wedding. I'll provide
 A masque which make your Hymen turn his saffron
 Into a sullen coat, and sing sad requiems
 To your departing souls.
 Blood shall put out your torches; and, instead
 Of gaudy flowers about your wanton necks,

An axe shall hang, like a prodigious meteor,
 Ready to crop your loves' sweets. Hear, you gods!
 From this time do I shake all tittle off
 Of father to this woman, this base woman;
 And what there is of vengeance in a lion
 Chaft among dogs or robb'd of his dear young,
 The same, enforc'd more terrible, more mighty,
 Expect from me!

ARE. Sir, by that little life I have left to swear by,
 There's nothing that can stir me from myself.

What I have done, I have done without repentance,
 For death can be no bugbear unto me,
 So long as Pharamond is not my headsman.

DION. [*aside.*] Sweet peace upon thy soul, thou worthy maid,
 Whene'er thou diest! For this time I'll excuse thee,
 Or be thy prologue.

PHI. Sir, let me speak next;
 And yet my dying words be better with you
 Than my dull living actions. If you aim
 At the dear life of this sweet innocent,
 You are a tyrant and a savage monster,
 [That feeds upon the blood you gave a life to;]⁹²
 Your memory shall be as foul behind you,
 As you are living; all your better deeds
 Shall be in water writ, but this in marble;
 No chronicle shall speak you, though your own,
 But for the shame of men. No monument,
 Though high and big as Pelion, shall be able
 To cover this base murder: make it rich
 With brass, with purest gold, and shining jasper,
 Like the Pyramides; lay on epitaphs

⁹² Q. Other edd. omit.

Such as make great men gods; my little
marble,
That only clothes my ashes, not my
faults,
Shall far outshine it. And for after-
issues,
Think not so madly of the heavenly
wisdoms,
That they will give you more for your
mad rage
To cut off, unless it be some snake, or
something
Like yourself, that in his birth shall
strangle you.
Remember my father, King! There
was a fault,
But I forgive it. Let that sin persuade
you
To love this lady; if you have a soul,
Think, save her, and be saved. For
myself,
I have so long expected this glad
hour,
So languisht under you, and daily
withered,
That, Heaven knows, it is a joy to die;
I find a recreation in 't.

[Enter a MESSENGER.]

MESS. Where is the King?

KING. Here.

MESS. Get you to your strength,
And rescue the Prince Pharamond from
danger;
He's taken prisoner by the citizens,
Fearing⁹³ the Lord Philaster.

DION. [aside.] Oh, brave followers!
Mutiny, my fine dear countrymen,
mutiny!

Now, my brave valiant foremen, shew
your weapons
In honour of your mistresses!

[Enter a SECOND MESSENGER.]

2 MESS. Arm, arm, arm, arm!

KING. A thousand devils take 'em!

DION. [aside.] A thousand blessings
on 'em!

2 MESS. Arm, O King! The city
is in mutiny,

Led by an old gray ruffian, who comes
on

In rescue of the Lord Philaster.

⁹³ i.e. fearing for.

KING. Away to the citadel! I'll see
them safe,
And then cope with these burghers. Let
the guard
And all the gentlemen give strong at-
tendance.

[Exeunt all except DION,
CLEREMONT, and THRASILINE.]

CLE. The city up! This was above
our wishes.

DION. Ay, and the marriage too. By
my life,

This noble lady has deceiv'd us all.
A plague upon myself, a thousand
plagues,

For having such unworthy thoughts of
her dear honour!

Oh, I could beat myself! Or do you
beat me,

And I'll beat you; for we had all one
thought.

CLE. No, no, 'twill but lose time.

DION. You say true. Are your swords
sharp?—Well, my dear countrymen
What-ye-lacks,⁹⁴ if you continue, and
fall not back upon the first broken
skin, I'll have you chronicled and
chronicled, and cut and chronicled, and
all-to-be-prais'd and sung in sonnets,
and bawled in new brave ballads, that
all tongues shall troll you in *saecula
saeculorum*, my kind can-carriers.

THRA. What, if a toy⁹⁵ take 'em
i' th' heels now, and they run all away,
and cry, "the devil take the hind-
most"?

DION. Then the same devil take the
foremost too, and souse him for his
breakfast! If they all prove cowards,
my curses fly among them, and be
speeding! May they have murrains
reign to keep the gentlemen at home
unbound in easy frieze! May the
moths branch⁹⁶ their velvets, and their
silks only be worn before sore eyes!
May their false lights undo 'em, and
discover presses,⁹⁷ holes, stains, and
oldness in their stuffs, and make them
shop-rid! May they keep whores and
horses, and break; and live mewed up
with necks of beef and turnips! May

⁹⁴ i.e. shopkeepers, who were in the habit of
thus addressing passers-by.

⁹⁵ trifle, whim.

⁹⁶ creases.

⁹⁷ eat patterns on.

they have many children, and none like the father! May they know no language but that gibberish they prattle to their parcels, unless it be the goatish Latin they write in their bonds—and may they write that false, and lose their debts!

[*Re-enter KING.*]

KING. Now the vengeance of all the gods confound them! How they swarm together! What a hum they raise!—Devils choke your wild throats!—If a man had need to use their valours, he must pay a brokerage for it, and then bring 'em on, and they will fight like sheep. 'Tis Philaster, none but Philaster, must allay this heat. They will not hear me speak, but fling dirt at me and call me tyrant. Oh, run, dear friend, and bring the Lord Philaster! Speak him fair; call him prince; do him all the courtesy you can; commend me to him. Oh, my wits, my wits!

[*Exit CLEREMONT.*]

DION. [*aside.*] Oh, my brave country men! as I live, I will not buy a pin out of your walls for this. Nay, you shall cozen me, and I'll thank you, and send you brawn and bacon, and soil⁹⁸ you every long vacation a brace of foremen,⁹⁹ that at Michaelmas shall come up fat and kicking.

KING. What they do with this poor prince, the gods know, and I fear.

DION. [*aside.*] Why, sir, they'll flay him, and make church-buckets on 's skin, to quench rebellion; then clap a rivet in 's sconce, and hang him up for a sign.

[*Enter CLEREMONT with PHILASTER.*]

KING. Oh, worthy sir, forgive me! Do not make Your miseries and my faults meet together, To bring a greater danger. Be yourself, Still sound amongst diseases. I have wrong'd you; And though I find it last, and beaten to it,

⁹⁸ fatten.

⁹⁹ geese.

Let first your goodness know it. Calm the people, And be what you were born to. Take your love, And with her my repentance, all my wishes, And all my prayers. By the gods, my heart speaks this; And if the least fall from me not perform'd, May I be struck with thunder!

PHI. Mighty sir, I will not do your greatness so much wrong, As not to make your word truth. Free the princess And the poor boy, and let me stand the shock Of this mad sea-breach, which I'll either turn, Or perish with it.

KING. Let your own word free them.

PHI. Then thus I take my leave, kissing your hand, And hanging on your royal word. Be kingly, And be not mov'd, sir. I shall bring you peace Or never bring myself back.

KING. All the gods go with thee.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE IV.¹⁰⁰

[*Enter an old CAPTAIN and CITIZENS with PHARAMOND.*]

CAP. Come, my brave myrmidons, let us fall on. Let your caps swarm, my boys, and your nimble tongues Forget your mother-gibberish of "what do you lack?" And set your mouths ope, children, till your palates Fall frighted half a fathom past the cure Of bay-salt and gross pepper, and then cry "Philaster. brave Philaster!" Let Philaster

¹⁰⁰ A street.

Be deeper in request, my ding-dongs,¹⁰¹
 My pairs of dear indentures,¹⁰² kings
 of clubs,
 Than your cold water-camlets,¹⁰³ or
 your paintings
 Spitted with copper.¹⁰⁴ Let not your
 hasty silks,
 Or your branch'd cloth of bodkin,¹⁰⁵ or
 your tissues,
 Dearly belov'd of spicèd cake and
 custards,
 Your Robin Hoods, Scarlets, and
 Johns, tie your affections
 In darkness to your shops. No dainty
 duckers,¹⁰⁶
 Up with your three-pil'd spirits, your
 wrought valours;¹⁰⁷
 And let your uncut cholers¹⁰⁸ make the
 King feel
 The measure of your mightiness. Phil-
 aster!

Cry, my rose-nobles,¹⁰⁹ cry!

ALL. Philaster! Philaster!

CAP. How do you like this, my lord-
 prince?

These are mad boys, I tell you; these
 are things

They will not strike their top-sails to
 a foist,¹¹⁰

And let a man of war, an argosy,

Hull¹¹¹ and cry cockles.¹¹²

PHA. Why, you rude slave, do you
 know what you do?

CAP. My pretty prince of puppets,
 we do know;

And give your greatness warning that
 you talk

No more such bug's-words,¹¹³ or that
 solder'd crown

Shall be scratch'd with a musket.¹¹⁴
 Dear prince Pippin,

Down with your noble blood, or, as I
 live,

I'll have you coddled.¹¹⁵—Let him
 loose, my spirits:

Make us a round ring with your bills,
 my Hectors,

And let us see what this trim man dares
 do.

Now, sir, have at you! here I lie;

And with this swashing blow (do you
 see, sweet prince?)

I could hulk¹¹⁶ your grace, and hang
 you up cross-legg'd.

Like a hare at a poulter's, and do this
 with this wiper.¹¹⁷

PHA. You will not see me mur-
 der'd, wicked villains?

1 CIT. Yes, indeed, will we, sir; we
 have not seen one

For a great while.

CAP. He would have weapons, would
 he?

Give him a broadside, my brave boys,
 with your pikes;

Branch me his skin in flowers like a
 satin,

And between every flower a mortal
 cut.—

Your royalty shall ravel!¹¹⁸—Jag him,
 gentlemen;

I'll have him cut to the kell,¹¹⁹ then
 down the seams.

O for a whip to make him galloon-
 laces!¹²⁰

I'll have a coach-whip.

PHA. Oh, spare me, gentlemen!

CAP. Hold, hold;

The man begins to fear and know him-
 self.

He shall for this time only be seel'd
 up,¹²¹

With a feather through his nose, that
 he may only

See heaven, and think whither he is
 going.

Nay, my beyond-sea sir, we will pro-
 claim you:

You would be king!

¹⁰¹ darlings.

¹⁰² Apprentices, who were bound by inden-
 tures, and whose usual weapons were clubs.
 Throughout these scenes, it is, of course, Lon-
 don citizens who are in view.

¹⁰³ a cloth, made of wool, sometimes mixed
 with silk, with a watered surface.

¹⁰⁴ colored cloth interwoven with copper.

¹⁰⁵ embroidered cloth, originally of gold and
 silk.

¹⁰⁶ cringers (?), duck-hunters (?).

¹⁰⁷ a pun on valour. ¹⁰⁸ a pun on collars.

¹⁰⁹ Another pun. Rose-nobles were gold coins.

¹¹⁰ a small vessel. ¹¹¹ float idly.

¹¹² be basely occupied. ¹¹³ swaggering words

¹¹⁴ a male sparrow-hawk, with a pun on the
 weapon.

¹¹⁵ stewed.

¹¹⁶ disembowel.

¹¹⁷ instrument for cleaning a gun.

¹¹⁸ fray out.

¹¹⁹ the caul about the hart's paunch.

¹²⁰ ribbons, tape.

¹²¹ have his eyelids sewed together like a
 hawk's.

Thou tender heir apparent to a church-
ale,¹²²

Thou slight prince of single sarcenet,¹²³

Thou royal ring-tail,¹²⁴ fit to fly at
nothing

But poor men's poultry, and have
every boy

Beat thee from that too with his bread
and butter!

PHA. Gods keep me from these hell-
hounds!

1 CIT. Shall 's geld him, captain?

CAP. No, you shall spare his
dowcets, my dear donsels;¹²⁵

As you respect the ladies, let them
flourish.

The curses of a longing woman kill

As speedy as a plague, boys.

1 CIT. I'll have a leg, that's certain.

2 CIT. I'll have an arm.

3 CIT. I'll have his nose, and at
mine own charge build

A college and clap 't upon the gate.¹²⁶

4 CIT. I'll have his little gut to
string a kit¹²⁷ with;

For certainly a royal gut will sound
like silver.

PHA. Would they were in thy belly,
and I past

My pain once!

5 CIT. Good captain, let me have his
liver to feed ferrets.

CAP. Who will have parcels else?
Speak.

PHA. Good gods, consider me! I
shall be tortur'd.

1 CIT. Captain, I'll give you the
trimming of your two-hand
sword,

And let me have his skin to make false
scabbards.

2 CIT. He had no horns, sir, had he?

CAP. No, sir, he's a pollard.¹²⁸

What wouldst thou do with horns?

2 CIT. Oh, if he had had,
I would have made rare hafts and
whistles of 'em;

But his shin-bones, if they be sound,
shall serve me.

¹²² i.e. a bastard, one born after the convi-
vialities of a church feast.

¹²³ thin silk. ¹²⁴ a sort of kite.

¹²⁵ diminutive of *dons*.

¹²⁶ in allusion to Brazenose College, Oxford.

¹²⁷ cittern. ¹²⁸ hornless animal.

[Enter PHILASTER.]

ALL. Long live Philaster, the brave
Prince Philaster!

PHI. I thank you, gentlemen. But
why are these
Rude weapons brought abroad, to teach
your hands

Uncivil trades?

CAP. My royal Rosicleer,¹²⁹
We are thy myrmidons, thy guard, thy
roarers;¹³⁰

And when thy noble body is in durance,
Thus do we clap our musty murrions¹³¹
on,

And trace the streets in terror. Is it
peace,

Thou Mars of men? Is the King
sociable,

And bids thee live? Art thou above
thy foemen,

And free as Phoebus? Speak. If not,
this stand¹³²

Of royal blood shall be abroach, a-tilt,
And run even to the lees of honour.

PHI. Hold, and be satisfied. I am
myself;

Free as my thoughts are; by the gods,
I am!

CAP. Art thou the dainty darling of
the King?

Art thou the Hylas to our Hercules?
Do the lords bow, and the regarded
scarlets¹³³

Kiss their gumm'd golls,¹³⁴ and cry,
"We are your servants"?

Is the court navigable and the pres-
ence stuck

With flags of friendship? If not, we
are thy castle,

And this man sleeps.

PHI. I am what I desire to be, your
friend;

I am what I was born to be, your
prince.

PHA. Sir, there is some humanity in
you;

You have a noble soul. Forget my
name,

¹²⁹ A hero in *The Mirrour of Knighthood*, a
romance from the Spanish. See *The Knight
of the Burning Pestle*.

¹³⁰ roistering blades. ¹³¹ steel caps.

¹³² cask (Pharamond).

¹³³ courtiers clad in scarlet.

¹³⁴ perfumed hands.

And know my misery; set me safe
 aboard
 From these wild cannibals, and as I
 live,
 I'll quit this land for ever. There is
 nothing,—
 Perpetual prisonment, cold, hunger,
 sickness
 Of all sorts, of all dangers, and all to-
 gether,
 The worst company of the worst men,
 madness, age,
 To be as many creatures as a woman,
 And do as all they do, nay, to
 despair,—
 But I would rather make it a new
 nature,
 And live with all these, than endure
 one hour
 Amongest these wild dogs.

PHI. I do pity you.—Friends, dis-
 charge your fears;
 Deliver me the prince. I'll warrant
 you

I shall be old enough to find my safety.

3 CIT. Good sir, take heed he does
 not hurt you;

He is a fierce man, I can tell you,
 sir.

CAP. Prince, by your leave, I'll have
 a surcingle¹³⁵

And make¹³⁶ you like a hawk.

[PHARAMOND strives.]

PHI. Away, away, there is no dan-
 ger in him:

Alas, he had rather sleep to shake his
 fit off!

Look you, friends, how gently he leads!
 Upon my word,

He's tame enough, he needs no further
 watching.

Good my friends, go to your houses,
 And by me have your pardons and my
 love;

And know there shall be nothing in my
 power

You may deserve, but you shall have
 your wishes.

To give you more thanks, were to flat-
 ter you.

Continue still your love; and for an
 earnest,

Drink this. [Gives money.]

¹³⁵ band.

¹³⁶ train.

ALL. Long mayst thou live, brave
 prince, brave prince, brave
 prince!

[Exeunt PHILASTER
 and PHARAMOND.]

CAP. Go thy ways, thou art the king
 of courtesy!

Fall off again, my sweet youths. Come,
 And every man trace to his house again,
 And hang his pewter up; then to the
 tavern,

And bring your wives in muffs. We
 will have music;

And the red grape shall make us dance
 and rise, boys. [Exeunt.]

SCENE V.¹³⁷

[Enter KING, ARETHUSA, GALATEA,
 MEGRA, DION, CLEREMONT,
 THRASILINE, BELLARIO, and At-
 tendants.]

KING. Is it appeas'd?

DION. Sir, all is quiet as this dead
 of night,

As peaceable as sleep. My lord Philas-
 ter

Brings on the prince himself.

KING. Kind gentleman!
 I will not break the least word I have
 given

In promise to him. I have heap'd a
 world

Of grief upon his head, which yet I
 hope

To wash away.

[Enter PHILASTER and PHARAMOND.]

CLE. My lord is come.

KING. My son!
 Blest be the time that I have leave to
 call

Such virtue mine! Now thou art in
 mine arms,

Methinks I have a salve unto my
 breast

For all the stings that dwell there.
 Streams of grief

That I have wrong'd thee, and as much
 of joy

That I repent it, issue from mine eyes;

¹³⁷ An apartment in the palace.

Let them appease thee. Take thy
right; take her;
She is thy right too; and forget to
urge

My vexèd soul with that I did before.

PHI. Sir, it is blotted from my
memory,

Past and forgotten.—For you, prince
of Spain,

Whom I have thus redeem'd, you have
full leave

To make an honourable voyage home.
And if you would go furnish'd to your
realm

With fair provision, I do see a lady,
Methinks, would gladly bear you
company.

How like you this piece?

MEG. Sir, he likes it well,
For he hath tried it, and hath found it
worth

His princely liking. We were ta'en
abed;

I know your meaning. I am not the
first

That nature taught to seek a fellow
forth;

Can shame remain perpetually in me,
And not in others? Or have princes
salves

To cure ill names, that meaner people
want?

PHI. What mean you?

MEG. You must get another ship,
To bear the princess and her boy to-
gether.

DION. How now!

MEG. Others took me, and I took
her and him

At that all women may be ta'en some-
time.

Ship us all four, my lord; we can
endure

Weather and wind alike.

KING. Clear thou thyself, or know
not me for father.

ARE. This earth, how false it is!
What means is left for me

To clear myself? It lies in your belief.
My lords, believe me; and let all things
else

Struggle together to dishonour me.

BEL. Oh, stop your ears, great King,
that I may speak

As freedom would! Then I will call
this lady

As base as are her actions. Hear me,
sir;

Believe your heated blood when it
rebels

Against your reason, sooner than this
lady.

MEG. By this good light, he bears it
handsomely.

PHI. This lady! I will sooner trust
the wind

With feathers, or the troubled sea with
pearl,

Than her with any thing. Believe her
not.

Why, think you, if I did believe her
words,

I would outlive 'em? Honour cannot
take

Revenge on you; then what were to be
known

But death?

KING. Forget her, sir, since all is
knit

Between us. But I must request of you
One favour, and will sadly ¹³⁸ be denied.

PHI. Command, whate'er it be.

KING. Swear to be true
To what you promise.

PHI. By the powers above,
Let it not be the death of her or him,
And it is granted!

KING. Bear away that boy
To torture; I will have her clear'd or
buried.

PHI. Oh, let me call my word back,
worthy sir!

Ask something else: bury my life and
right

In one poor grave; but do not take
away

My life and fame at once.

KING. Away with him! It stands
irrevocable.

PHI. Turn all your eyes on me.

Here stands a man,
The falsest and the basest of this world.

Set swords against this breast, some
honest man,

For I have liv'd till I am pitied!

My former deeds were hateful; but this
last

¹³⁸ shall be sorry to be denied.

Is pitiful, for I unwillingly
Have given the dear preserver of my
life

Unto his torture. Is it in the power
Of flesh and blood to carry this, and
live? [*Offers to stab himself.*]

ARE. Dear sir, be patient yet! Oh,
stay that hand!

KING. Sirs, strip that boy.

DION. Come, sir; your tender flesh
Will try your constancy.

BEL. Oh, kill me, gentlemen!

DION. No.—Help, sirs.

BEL. Will you torture me?

KING. Haste there;

Why stay you?

BEL. Then I shall not break my
vow,

You know, just gods, though I discover
all.

KING. How's that? Will he con-
fess?

DION. Sir, so he says.

KING. Speak then.

BEL. Great King, if you command
This lord to talk with me alone, my
tongue

Urg'd by my heart, shall utter all the
thoughts

My youth hath known; and stranger
things than these

You hear not often.

KING. Walk aside with him.

[*DION and BELLARIO walk apart.*]

DION. Why speak'st thou not?

BEL. Know you this face, my lord?

DION. No.

BEL. Have you not seen it, nor the
like?

DION. Yes, I have seen the like, but
readily

I know not where.

BEL. I have been often told
In court of one Euphrasia, a lady,
And daughter to you; betwixt whom
and me

They that would flatter my bad face
would swear

There was such strange resemblance,
that we two

Could not be known asunder, drest
alike.

DION. By Heaven, and so there is!

BEL. For her fair sake,

Who now doth spend the spring-time of
her life

In holy pilgrimage, move to the
King,

That I may scape this torture.

DION. But thou speak'st
As like Euphrasia as thou dost look.

How came it to thy knowledge that she
lives

In pilgrimage?

BEL. I know it not, my lord;
But I have heard it, and do scarce be-
lieve it.

DION. Oh, my shame! is it possible?
Draw near,

That I may gaze upon thee. Art thou
she,

Or else her murderer? ¹³⁹ Where wert
thou born?

BEL. In Syracuse.

DION. What's thy name?

BEL. Euphrasia.

DION. Oh, 'tis just, 'tis she!

Now I do know thee. Oh, that thou
hadst died,

And I had never seen thee nor my
shame!

How shall I own thee? Shall this
tongue of mine

E'er call thee daughter more?

BEL. Would I had died indeed! I
wish it too;

And so I must have done by vow, ere
publish'd

What I have told, but that there was no
means

To hide it longer. Yet I joy in this,
The princess is all clear.

KING. What, have you done?

DION. All is discovered.

PHI. Why then hold you me?
All is discovered! Pray you, let me go.

[*Offers to stab himself.*]

KING. Stay him.

ARE. What is discovered?

DION. Why, my shame.

It is a woman; let her speak the rest.

PHI. How? That again!

DION. It is a woman.

PHI. Blest be you powers that
favour innocence!

¹³⁹ In some barbarous countries, it was be-
lieved that the murderer inherited the form
and qualities of his victim. (Mason.)

KING. Lay hold upon that lady.

[MEGRA is seized.]

PHI. It is a woman, sir!—Hark, gentlemen,
It is a woman!—Arethusa, take
My soul into thy breast, that would be
gone
With joy. It is a woman! Thou art
fair,
And virtuous still to ages, in despite
Of malice.

KING. Speak you, where lies his
shame?

BEL. I am his daughter.

PHI. The gods are just.

DION. I dare accuse none; but, be-
fore you two,
The virtue of our age, I bend my knee
For mercy. [Kneels.]

PHI. [raising him.] Take it freely;
for I know,
Though what thou didst were undis-
creetly done,
'Twas meant well.

ARE. And for me,
I have a power to pardon sins, as
oft

As any man has power to wrong me.

CLE. Noble and worthy!

PHI. But Bellario,
(For I must call thee still so,) tell me
why

Thou didst conceal thy sex. It was a
fault,

A fault, Bellario, though thy other
deeds

Of truth outweigh'd it: all these
jealousies

Had flown to nothing if thou hadst dis-
covered

What now we know.

BEL. My father oft would speak
Your worth and virtue; and, as I did
grow

More and more apprehensive,¹⁴⁰ I did
thirst

To see the man so prais'd. But yet all
this

Was but a maiden-longing, to be lost
As soon as found; till, sitting in my
window,

Printing my thoughts in lawn, I saw a
god,

¹⁴⁰ quick to understand.

I thought, (but it was you,) enter our
gates.

My blood flew out and back again, as
fast

As I had puffed it forth and sucked it in
Like breath. Then was I call'd away
in haste

To entertain you. Never was a man,
Heav'd from a sheep-cote to a sceptre,
rais'd

So high in thoughts as I. You left a
kiss

Upon these lips then, which I mean to
keep

From you for ever. I did hear you
talk,

Far above singing. After you were
gone,

I grew acquainted with my heart, and
search'd

What stirr'd it so: alas, I found it love!
Yet far from lust; for, could I but have
liv'd

In presence of you, I had had my
end.

For this I did delude my noble father
With a feign'd pilgrimage, and drest
myself

In habit of a boy; and, for I knew
My birth no match for you, I was past
hope

Of having you; and, understanding well
That when I made discovery of my
sex

I could not stay with you, I made a
vow,

By all the most religious things a maid
Could call together, never to be known,
Whilst there was hope to hide me from
men's eyes,

For other than I seem'd, that I might
ever

Abide with you. Then sat I by the
fount,

Where first you took me up.

KING. Search out a match
Within our kingdom, where and when
thou wilt,

And I will pay thy dowry; and thyself
Wilt well deserve him.

BEL. Never, sir, will I
Marry; it is a thing within my vow:
But, if I may have leave to serve the
princess,

To see the virtues of her lord and her,
I shall have hope to live.

ARE. I, Philaster,
Cannot be jealous, though you had a
lady

Drest like a page to serve you; nor will
I

Suspect her living here.—Come, live
with me;

Live free as I do. She that loves my
lord,

Curst be the wife that hates her!

PHL. I grieve such virtue should be
laid in earth

Without an heir.—Hear me, my royal
father:

Wrong not the freedom of our souls so
much,

To think to take revenge of that base
woman;

Her malice cannot hurt us. Set her
free

As she was born, saving from shame
and sin.

KING. Set her at liberty.—But leave
the court;

This is no place for such.—You, Phara-
mond,

Shall have free passage, and a conduct
home

Worthy so great a prince. When you
come there,

Remember 'twas your faults that lost
you her,

And not my purpos'd will.

PHA. I do confess,
Renowned sir.

KING. Last, join your hands in one.
Enjoy, Philaster,

This kingdom, which is yours, and,
after me,

Whatever I call mine. My blessing on
you!

All happy hours be at your marriage-
joys,

That you may grow yourselves over all
lands,

And live to see your plenteous branches
spring

Wherever there is sun! Let princes
learn

By this to rule the passions of their
blood;

For what Heaven wills can never be
withstood.

[*Exeunt omnes.*]

CHAPTER V

THE CLASSICAL DRAMA OF FRANCE

The medieval drama of France greatly resembled that of England. The similar origin in religious services of the Church and the use in each country of the Latin language are notable points in common. As in England, the plays in time became secularized. Thereafter the drama of France developed somewhat differently. The subject-matter of the French mystery plays was essentially the same great biblical story which was the basis of the English miracles. The plays were given by some city, great lord, monastery, or society. Instead of a series of pageant-wagons moving before various groups of people, however, the people passed a long extemporized stage on which were erected in a row a number of subsidiary stages or "mansions" reaching as high as twenty-two in number. At one side was Paradise, at the other, Hell; and in between were such stations as, in one typical case, a hall, Nazareth, a Temple, Jerusalem, the palace, the House of Bishops, the Golden Gate, the sea, the *limbe des pères*. The simultaneous stage was never the rule in England. Lyly, in *Mother Bombie*, for instance, approximated it in his adaptation of the Roman custom of having several houses open on a common street. As has been shown, the preserved full cycle of Coventry plays is now believed to have been produced on some such stage. In showing two armies encamped, Shakespeare's *Richard III* follows a convention of the simultaneous stage.

At the height of their popularity, the French religious plays were forbidden by a decree of Parliament, November 17, 1548. The decree was aimed at religious drama on the ground that it had become vulgarized. Profane mysteries were not forbidden, but—as in England—the religious subject-matter was so nearly the only one that the whole body of organized drama—miracle, morality, and farce—was destined to decline rapidly.

Almost immediately another period in French drama began. The famous literary group, the Pléiade, was formed about 1549, and one of its members, Joachim du Bellay, wrote a treatise, *Défense et Illustration de la Langue Française* (1549) in which a body of new linguistic and literary principles was promulgated. With reference to the drama, he condemned the farces and moralities, and spoke favorably of the work of the ancients.

A member of the Pléiade seized the opportunity of becoming the first of the new tragic dispensation. Étienne Jodelle (1532-1573) produced in 1552 before Henry II and his court a tragedy entitled *Cléopâtre*. This work is considered the first tragedy of the French stage. *Cléopâtre* and the tragedies which followed conformed generally to the three unities. There was but one plot; the play was limited to one day of elapsed time; and all action was supposed to take place in one locality. The rules rose out of a misinterpretation of the Greek drama. Tragedy in ancient Greece developed out of great national legends; the action was known by all the audience; and the drama restricted itself to lyric and oratorical interpretations of the crisis—the more necessarily so because of the few actors allowed in a Greek tragedy. In observing the unities, French tragedy became restricted to catastrophe drama. Though French tragedy had

its *Cléopâtre* analogous to the English *Gorboduc*, it had no *Tamburlaine* to shatter the more fettering rules and give the drama a chance to grow. The new drama was never popular. Private representations were the rule rather than the exception and the plays were read rather than acted. Besides Jodelle, remembered names are Robert Garnier (1534-1590) and Antoine de Montchrétien (c. 1575-1621).

In comedy, which in the main came after tragedy in France instead of before as in England, the pretence of imitating the ancients was not quite so well carried out. The popular medieval farce transmitted many of its characteristics to the new comedy. The Latin division of a play into five acts came, however, into comedy, as did a few other features,—more perhaps through Italian comedies than directly from Plautus and Terence. A typical borrowed plot was that (used in England by Lyly in *Mother Bombye*) of a pair of young lovers, knavish servants, and avaricious fathers. Pierre Larivey (1540-1611) represents best the comedy of the period.

When all is said, however, the Pléiade failed in its ambition. It was not able to vitalize the "new" drama in France. It failed to find a common ground between the national genius and the transplanted dramatic practice of the ancient world.

With the forbidding of the biblical plays in 1548, the Confrères de la Passion made little use of their monopoly at Paris. Their letting of their theater in the Hotel de Bourgogne in 1599 marked the beginning of another era in French drama. In 1628, the Hotel de Bourgogne became a regular theater. Louis XIII authorized its company to assume the style of the "Troupe Royale." Here played many of the greatest actors; and here were presented most of the plays of Corneille and Racine. The theater of the Hotel de Bourgogne was, however, not the only important playhouse. Others were Le Théâtre du Marais (1600-1673) and Molière's Theater (1658-1680). The Comédie-Française, founded in 1680 by command of Louis XIV, played comedy and tragedy, and by its monopoly exerted for more than a century a great impediment to initiative in the drama of France.

The hall was often a made-over tennis-room, poorly lighted by chandeliers of candles. The stage employed scenery—with a certain later influence on English Restoration drama—but little skill was involved since most of the classic plays required but a single setting. In comparison with the elaborate directions today of Barrie or Shaw or Barker, the setting-directions seem almost negligible. For a production of *Le Cid*, the scene shows "a room with four doors; an arm-chair for the king"; for *Le Misanthrope*, "a room with six chairs—three letters—some boots." The scenery of the classic drama did not exist to attract attention to itself. It was the setting for the action of the plays—and was in no sense, as later, a rival art. In contrast with the relatively simple scene, costumes were often (as on the Elizabethan stage in England) very sumptuous.

With the rise of the French classical drama, the "rules" obtained a sway definitely accepted for a century and a half. Despite the fact that certain writers of tragedies, tragi-comedies, and pastorals had protested, the classical "rules" had been accumulating prestige. With the success of the first regular tragedy, *Sophonisbe* (1634) by Jean Mairet (1604-1686), they assumed an authority which they did not lose until attacked successfully in the nineteenth century by Victor Hugo in the preface to *Cromwell* (1827) and in the famous triumphant première of *Hernani* (1830).

The rules demanded in brief that a play have but one main action, that this action take place within one town, and within twenty-four hours. These rules were supposed to be the extreme limits of reasonableness—more latitude would tax too greatly the credulity of a spectator. Various Frenchmen stated the

formula as Sir Philip Sidney had done in England in detail in his *Defence of Poesy* (1581):

For it [*Gorboduc*] is faulty both in place and time, the two necessary companions of all corporal actions. For where the stage should always represent but one place, and the uttermost time presupposed in it should be, both by Aristotle's precept and common reason, but one day; there is both many days and many places inartificially imagined.

But if it be so in *Gorboduc*, how much more in all the rest? where you shall have Asia of the one side, and Afric of the other, and so many other under-kingdoms, that the player, when he cometh in, must ever begin with telling where he is, or else the tale will not be conceived. Now ye shall have three ladies walk to gather flowers, and then we must believe the stage to be a garden. By and by we hear news of shipwreck in the same place, and then we are to blame if we accept it not for a rock. Upon the back of that comes out a hideous monster with fire and smoke, and then the miserable beholders are bound to take it for a cave. While in the meantime two armies fly in, represented with four swords and bucklers, and then what hard heart will not receive it for a pitched field? . . .

. . . But they will say, How then shall we set forth a story which containeth both many places and many times? And do they not know that a tragedy is tied to the laws of poesy, and not of history; not bound to follow the story, but having liberty either to feign a quite new matter, or to frame the history to the most tragical conveniency? Again, many things may be told which cannot be showed,—if they know the difference betwixt reporting and representing. As for example I may speak, though I am here, of Peru, and in speech digress from that to the description of Calicut; but in action I cannot represent it without Pacolet's horse. And so was the manner the ancients took, by some *Nuntius* to recount things done in former time or other place.

With the way illuminated by lesser lights, Pierre Corneille (1606-1684) leaped to fame as the first great dramatist of France. Corneille wrote comedies and criticisms, but his fame rests on his tragedies. *Médée* appeared in 1635, and his masterpiece, *Le Cid*, in 1636, two years after Mairet's *Sophonisbe*. Other important tragedies by Corneille are *Horace* (1640), *Cinna* (1640), *Polyeucte* (1642), and *La Mort de Pompée* (1643).

An analysis of *Le Cid* will reveal something of Corneille's method and his achievement. The title-character is the eleventh century Spanish hero, Rodrigue Diaz de Bivar, who won glory as a leader against the Moors. The youthful Don Rodrigue loves and is loved by Chimène, daughter of Don Gomès, an arrogant noble who resents the king's appointment of Rodrigue's elderly father, Don Diègue, to an important position. A quarrel ensues and Gomès slaps the feeble Diègue across the face. Unable to save his own honor, Diègue forces the task upon his son. Torn between love and honor, Rodrigue confronts the scornful Gomès and in the resultant duel kills him. Chimène, torn between love and hate, importunes the king for vengeance. Diègue, on the other hand, proffers the loyalty of himself and his son. In the intervening night Rodrigue repels an attack of the Moors and captures two kings who hail him as "Le Cid," a title confirmed by the Spanish king. Chimène demands a champion against Don Rodrigue, and a Don Sanche offers. The king reluctantly consents to the duel which results in the disarming of Don Sanche. Chimène has been hysterical twice on believing Rodrigue dead, but in the end steadfastly refuses to marry the murderer of her father.

In his "*Avertissement*" Corneille pays his respects to Aristotle: "*Ce grand homme a traité la poétique avec tant d'adresse et de jugement, que les préceptes qu'il nous en a laissés sont de tous les temps et de tous les peuples.*"¹ Corneille goes on to say, however, that Aristotle was concerned with the passions and persons appropriate to tragedy, rather than with superficial details; and points out that it was not Aristotle but Horace who prescribed the number of acts.

¹"That great man discussed poetry with such skill and judgment that the precepts which he has left us apply to all times and peoples."

In the "*Examen du Cid*," on the other hand, Corneille admits the constriction of the rules which he earnestly tries to follow. In crowding into a single night in Seville all the passionate interest of Don Rodrigue's life, the author confesses that he falsifies history and reason. But the French reader or spectator in the seventeenth or eighteenth century accepted the compression as a convention, just as in any dramatic performance one must accept great compression of material, or just as today one accepts the convention of the three-walled room. Corneille's glorious poetry, his dramatic situations (Rodrigue and his father, Rodrigue and Chimène's father, Rodrigue and Chimène), his depiction of character in struggle (Diègue, Rodrigue, Chimène, Urrique), give the reader all the high delight to be expected of the greatest tragedy.

Corneille's main aim was grandeur. He named as the ideal character "a brilliant person of exalted rank and with a penchant toward virtue or crime." Seeking an illustrious personality in the throes of a dynamic situation, Corneille turned naturally to history or mythology for many of his plots—as is indicated by the above-quoted titles of his plays. The dominant characteristic of a Corneille protagonist is an imperious will—directed toward good or evil. Thus in *Le Cid*, Gomès determines not to apologize to Diègue, Rodrigue determines to avenge his father, Chimène to avoid marriage with Rodrigue. In *Horace*, Horace and Curiace determine to defend their country. In *Polyeucte*, the title-character wills to serve his God loyally, and Pauline wills to serve her husband loyally. But indomitable resolution is not confined to heroic personages; it is the actuating passion of criminal characters as well—for instance, Médée in *Médée* and Cléopâtre in *Rodogune*. Corneille's characters remind one of Othello, Richard III, and Tamburlaine. His plots without their compression would be very Elizabethan. One wonders if his genius would not have flowered even more notably if he had been an Englishman of the age of Shakespeare.

Seeking the dramatic at all odds, Corneille often became complicated and often—as noticed in *Le Cid*—falsified history. But Sidney in his apology had recommended that history be made subservient to dramatic art; Shakespeare had so regarded it; and Corneille was true to the purposes for which he used history—to have lofty characters (as the Greeks had had) and to give, to the great scenes which he portrayed, a background of importance.

Corneille was a great dramatic world-poet. His plays at once gained popularity on the stage, and have not yet lost their power. His style is forceful and compact, suited to the action. Many passages are characterized by an epigrammatic terseness which has made them survive as popular quotations of succeeding ages. Examples are Rodrigue's

Je suis jeune, il est vrai, mais aux âmes bien nées,
La valeur n'attend pas le nombre des années.¹

and Chimène's

Mourir pour le pays n'est pas un triste sort;
C'est s'immortaliser par une belle mort.²

Corneille's literary merit, of course, consists not so much in isolated sententious or stylistic passages as in the solid ensemble of a masterpiece.

Besides his intrinsic merit, Corneille has a special importance to students of English drama because of the influence exerted by his critical prefaces and his plays. This subject belongs properly to the next chapter, but a few facts must be noted here. The heyday of Corneille's fame was the period during which

¹ "I am young, it is true, but in hearts of noble blood,
Valor does not await length of years."

² "To die for one's country is not an unhappy lot;
Rather it is making oneself immortal by a beautiful death."

a great number of English Royalists were in exile in France, and these exiles were the people who established the new theaters in England under the authorization of Charles II. The influence of French tragedy on the English stage is, then, not surprising. Perhaps Corneille's genius was not suited for Restoration imitation; perhaps no English genius arose to transplant it. At any rate, the Corneille influence resulted not in a series of great English tragedies, but in helping shape the heroic plays so characteristic of the 1660 period. Corneille's plots were condemned by Racine, and (as often in the case of a work by Victor Hugo) one feels that from a lesser genius they might not be acceptable. Even in *Le Cid* the hero's rapid movement from scenes of love to scenes of combat with a foe of another faith is the extravagant plot of the English heroic play. And Rodrigue's boast might have been made by Dryden's Almanzor:

Faut-il combattre encor mille et mille rivaux,
Aux deux bouts de la terre étendre mes travaux,
Forcer moi seul un camp, mettre en fuite une armée,
Des héros fabuleux passer la renommée?
Si mon crime par là se peut enfin laver,
J'ose tout entreprendre, et puis tout achever.¹

Even more exactly a foreshadowing of the English heroic play, however, is *Polyeucte*, with its definite clash between Christians and Pagans; its super-hero, Polyeucte, and his faithful wife, Pauline. But the English heroic play had native elements as well as French, and Corneille must not be blamed if Davenant, Dryden, and others borrowed his type of plot without approaching his greatness.

In time Racine follows Molière, but as a tragic dramatist he had best be considered immediately after Corneille. Pierre Racine (1639-1699) wrote lyric verse, epigrams, and at least one comedy, but his place in literature is due to the great tragedies which he produced between 1667 and 1691—*Andromaque* (1667), *Britannicus* (1669), *Bérénice* (1670), *Bajazet* (1672), *Mithridate* (1673), *Iphigénie* (1674), *Phèdre* (1677), *Esther* (1689), *Athalie* (1691).

Racine condemned the unnaturalness of Corneille, and stated that his own aim was not to astonish but to excite the emotions. His special interest is passion, usually a sudden powerful burst of passion; and he is consequently unhampered by his adherence to the rules. A few hours in one place are all he needs. The passion may be ambition, love, or jealousy—taken at the crisis. When the play begins, the tension is high, and the culmination comes swiftly. Following the precedent of Sophocles, Shakespeare, and Corneille, Racine employed lofty personages as characters. His choice of historical, legendary, and biblical subjects gave him dignified, known characters for his plays. Racine's style sums up elegance and simplicity—it is the beau ideal of the classic style. Racine exerted an occasional specific influence (in *Esther* and *Berenice* John Masefield has adapted two of Racine's tragedies) on English drama, but his most potent influence was in the authenticity which he helped to confer on the classic principles.

As tragedy had done with Corneille, so comedy sprang into prominence with Jean Baptiste Poquelin (1622-1673), famous under his stage name of Molière. After a chequered theatrical career, Molière came to fame in Paris in 1658. He at once attracted the favor of the king, became installed at the Palais-Royal,

¹ "Must I fight thousands of rivals still,
Extend my labors to the ends of the earth,
Single-handed take a camp, put an army to flight,
Surpass the fame of the heroes of old?
If my crime, by these things, can at last be wiped out,
There is nothing I would not dare, nothing I would not achieve."

married an actress of his company, and lived a busy life as author, actor, and director up to the time of his death in 1673.

Molière is often compared with Shakespeare. Each was an upward-looking man of the people. Each was a practical business man of the theater as well as a dramatic author. Each, moreover, was an actor. Although Molière limited his output to comedy, he undoubtedly ranks with Shakespeare as one of the three or four greatest dramatists of all time.

Molière gained his first great success with *Les Précieuses Ridicules* (1659), which has become for the world the standard burlesque of pretentious affectation of fashion. *L'École des Maris* appeared in 1661 and *L'École des Femmes* in 1662. Molière's masterpieces came between 1666 and his death: *Le Misanthrope* (1666), *L'Avare* (1668), *Tartuffe* (1669), *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme* (1670), *Les Femmes Savantes* (1672), and *Le Malade Imaginaire* (1673).

Tartuffe is usually cited as Molière's supreme masterpiece. As usual with Molière, the predominating interest is in character. The credulous M. Orgon installs in his house the hypocrite Tartuffe, who—by flattery and blandishment—seeks to possess his host's means and incidentally seduce his wife. Such a situation might promise a Restoration plot, but Molière succeeds in handling it with delicacy and moral purpose as well as with supreme dramatic and humorous effect.

In the opinion of Molière, the goal of comedy was the correct portrayal of contemporaries. This he achieved so successfully that his contemporary portraits became permanent types, possessed of enduring verisimilitude. Harpagon (*L'Avare*), Tartuffe (*Tartuffe*), and M. Jourdain (*Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*) are a few of the many names he has made synonymous with their types for the modern world.

Among English dramatists, Ben Jonson is perhaps most nearly to be compared with Molière. Jonson strove for, and Molière worked under, the classical principles. Titles like *The Miser* and *The Alchemist*, characters like Tartuffe and Volpone indicate a community of material and method. But Molière was by far the greater genius. Ben Jonson's plays are dead as far as the stage is concerned and make no claim on the general reader. Molière's plays still hold the stage and afford fascinating reading in French or in English. Molière, in fine, is the most ancient dramatist in any tongue whose plays are still essentially modern. A comedy of Molière is not unlike a late nineteenth- or an early twentieth-century problem play.

Molière realized that people go to the theater primarily for amusement; consequently he draws on most of the possible humorous means. His plays abound not only in the more ordinary humor of jokes and physical clashes, but in humorous situations, and above all in manifestations of the true comedy of character.

But Molière has also in each of his plays an implied moral lesson. He emphasizes the sanity of the golden mean and teaches that excess results in misfortune. Each drama delivers an attack on some vice or weakness—as *Tartuffe* against hypocrisy. The morality of the theater is shown in the preface to *Tartuffe*:

J'avoue qu'il y a des lieux qu'il vaut mieux fréquenter que le théâtre; et si l'on veut blâmer les choses qui ne regardent pas directement Dieu et notre salut, il est certain que la comédie en doit être . . . ; mais, supposé, comme il est vrai, que les exercices de la piété souffrent des intervalles et que les hommes aient besoin de divertissement, je soutiens qu'on ne leur en peut trouver un qui soit plus innocent que la comédie.¹

¹"I admit that there are better places to frequent than the theater, and if one wishes to criticize those things which do not directly concern God and our salvation, comedy certainly is to be included among them . . . but suppose, as is the case, that there are intervals between works of piety and that men need diversion, I maintain that none more innocent than comedy can be found."

Molière, to sum up, is perhaps the world's supremely great writer of comic drama. He was so thoroughly a man of the theater that his dramatic ability was in no way handicapped by the conventions which he accepted. No other French dramatist equaled him in vitality. In his clearness, his good sense, his truth, and his humor, he is one of the characteristic representatives of the genius of France.

Molière's influence on English drama was immediate and profound. The specific product of the Restoration period—apart from the short-lived heroic play—was the comedy of manners—the realistic society comedy of Wycherley, Etherege, Congreve, Vanbrugh, and Farquhar. This school of comedy, as elsewhere pointed out, owed much to Fletcher and the later Jacobean dramatists of intrigue comedy, but it also owed much to Molière. In a general way, the type of contemporary comedy of manners formed by Molière was the type followed by the Restoration authors. But what a difference! The imitators had neither the comic genius nor the moral purpose of Molière. They followed his lead in the portrayal of the contemporary social background, but intrigue and not character dominated their interest. Even when whole scenes are adapted, the spirit of Molière is somehow lost.

Of Molière's specific influence, which has been shown by Dr. Dudley H. Miles to be present in more than sixty surviving English plays, a few illustrations will suffice. Etherege's *The Man of Mode* owes much to *Les Précieuses Ridicules*. Wholly different though they are in spirit, two of Wycherley's plays are based on Molière—*The Country Wife* on *L'École des Femmes* and *L'École des Maris*, and *The Plain Dealer* on *Le Misanthrope*. Beginning with Davenant and Dryden, and continuing with Etherege and Wycherley, Otway and Shadwell, Congreve, and Vanbrugh, and Farquhar, the influence of Molière was definitely felt in some way by nearly every writer of comedy and most writers of tragedy down as late as Richard Brinsley Sheridan, the very title of whose masterpiece, *The School for Scandal*, is adapted from Molière.

The great classic dramatists of France—Corneille, Molière, Racine—were so immediately and so thoroughly appreciated that they gave rise in France as well as in England to an imitative school.

Of the eighteenth century followers in France, by all odds the most famous is François Marie Arouet, known by his assumed name, de Voltaire (1694-1778). Voltaire, poet, historian, and satirist, wrote—in the theatrical field—mainly tragedies. The best known are *Zaïre* (1732) and *Mérope* (1743). Voltaire took his stand for verse and for the unities and saved for another generation the tradition of Corneille and Racine. He was, with reservations, a lover of Shakespeare and copied him. *Zaïre* for instance is in many respects an adapted *Othello*. Besides Voltaire no French tragic dramatist of the eighteenth century deserves a place in a book on English drama.

In comedy after Molière, sentiment played a large part, but since England no longer followed the lead of France, the matter is not within the province of the present volume. The leading comic writer of the century, however, was Pierre Augustin Caron de Beaumarchais (1732-1799) whose *Le Barbier de Séville* and *Le Mariage de Figaro* have long enjoyed popularity on the English and on the American stage.

Later French dramatists—Hugo, Rostand, and others—will be noticed in their contacts with English drama. It is important in conclusion to note one result of the dramatic organization in France. It may have resisted initiative, but its conservatism made it preserve the poetic drama alive and thus make possible such a play as *Cyrano de Bergerac* at a time when the English poetic drama had been nearly three centuries dead.

TARTUFFE *

MOLIÈRE

Translated into English verse by *Curtis Hidden Page*

CHARACTERS

MADAME PERNELLE, *mother of ORGON.*
 ORGON, *husband of ELMIRE.*
 ELMIRE, *wife of ORGON.*
 DAMIS, *son of ORGON.*
 MARIANE, *daughter of ORGON, in love with VALÈRE.*
 VALÈRE, *in love with MARIANE.*
 CLÉANTE, *brother-in-law of ORGON.*
 TARTUFFE, *a hypocrite.*
 DORINE, *MARIANE's maid.*
 M. LOYAL, *a bailiff.*
 FLIPOTTE, *MADAME PERNELLE's servant.*
 A Police Officer.

SCENE—Paris.

ACT I

[*Enter MADAME PERNELLE and FLIPOTTE, her servant; ELMIRE, MARIANE, CLÉANTE, DAMIS, DORINE.*]

MME. PER. Come, come, Flipotte, and let me get away.

ELM. You hurry so, I hardly can attend you.

MME. PER. Then don't, my daughter-in-law. Stay where you are. I can dispense with your polite attentions.

ELM. We're only paying what is due you, mother.

Why must you go away in such a hurry?

MME. PER. Because I can't endure your carryings-on,

And no one takes the slightest pains to please me.

I leave your house, I tell you, quite disgusted;

You do the opposite of my instructions; You've no respect for anything; each one

Must have his say; it's perfect pandemonium.

DOR. If . . .

MME. PER. You're a servant wench, my girl, and much

Too full of gab, and too impertinent And free with your advice on all occasions.

DAM. But . . .

MME. PER. You're a fool, my boy—f, o, o, l

Just spells your name. Let grandma tell you that.

I've said a hundred times to my poor son,

Your father, that you'd never come to good

Or give him anything but plague and torment.

MAR. I think . . .

MME. PER. O dearie me, his little sister!

You're all demureness, butter wouldn't melt

In *your* mouth, one would think to look at you.

Still waters, though, they say . . . you know the proverb;

And I don't like your doings on the sly.

ELM. But, mother . . .

MME. PER. Daughter, by your leave, your conduct

In everything is altogether wrong;

You ought to set a good example for 'em;

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Their dear departed mother did much better.

You are extravagant; and it offends me,

To see you always decked out like a princess.

A woman who would please her husband's eyes

Alone, wants no such wealth of fineries.

CLÉ. But, madam, after all . . .

MME. PER. Sir, as for you,
The lady's brother, I esteem you highly,

Love, and respect you. But, sir, all the same,

If I were in my son's, her husband's, place,

I'd urgently entreat you not to come
Within our doors. You preach a way
of living

That decent people cannot tolerate.

I'm rather frank with you; but that's my way—

I don't mince matters, when I mean a thing.

DAM. Mr. Tartuffe, your friend, is mighty lucky . . .

MME. PER. He is a holy man, and must be heeded;

I can't endure, with any show of patience,

To hear a scatterbrains like you attack him.

DAM. What! Shall I let a bigot criticaster

Come and usurp a tyrant's power here?
And shall we never dare amuse ourselves

Till this fine gentleman deigns to consent?

DOR. If we must hark to him, and heed his maxims,

There's not a thing we do but what's a crime;

He censures everything, this zealous carper.

MME. PER. And all he censures is well censured, too.

He wants to guide you on the way to heaven;

My son should train you all to love him well.

DAM. No, madam, look you, nothing—not my father

Nor anything—can make me tolerate him.

I should belie my feelings not to say so.

His actions rouse my wrath at every turn;

And I foresee that there must come of it

An open rupture with this sneaking scoundrel.

DOR. Besides, 'tis downright scandalous to see

This unknown upstart master of the house—

This vagabond, who hadn't, when he came,

Shoes to his feet, or clothing worth six farthings,

And who so far forgets his place, as now

To censure everything, and rule the roost!

MME. PER. Eh! Mercy sakes alive! Things would go better

If all were governed by his pious orders.

DOR. He passes for a saint in your opinion.

In fact, he's nothing but a hypocrite.

MME. PER. Just listen to her tongue!

DOR. I wouldn't trust him,

Nor yet his Lawrence, without bonds and surety.

MME. PER. I don't know what the servant's character

May be; but I can guarantee the master

A holy man. You hate him and reject him

Because he tells home truths to all of you.

'Tis sin alone that moves his heart to anger,

And Heaven's interest is his only motive.

DOR. Of course. But why, especially of late,

Can he let nobody come near the house?

Is Heaven offended at a civil call

That he should make so great a fuss about it?

I'll tell you, if you like, just what I think;

[*Pointing to ELMIRE.*] Upon my word,
he's jealous of our mistress.

MME. PER. You hold your tongue,
and think what you are saying.

He's not alone in censuring these visits;
The turmoil that attends your sort of
people,

Their carriages forever at the door,
And all their noisy footmen, flocked to-
gether,

Annoy the neighborhood, and raise a
scandal.

I'd gladly think there's nothing really
wrong;

But it makes talk; and that's not as it
should be.

CLÉ. Eh! madam can you hope to
keep folk's tongues

From wagging? It would be a griev-
ous thing

If, for the fear of idle talk about us,
We had to sacrifice our friends. No,
no;

Even if we could bring ourselves to do
it,

Think you that every one would then
be silenced?

Against backbiting there is no defense.
So let us try to live in innocence,

To silly tattle pay no heed at all,
And leave the gossips free to vent their
gall.

Dor. Our neighbor Daphne, and her
little husband,

Must be the ones who slander us, I'm
thinking.

Those whose own conduct's most ridicu-
lous,

Are always quickest to speak ill of
others;

They never fail to seize at once upon
The slightest hint of any love affair,

And spread the news of it with glee,
and give it

The character they'd have the world
believe in.

By others' actions, painted in their
colors,

They hope to justify their own; they
think,

In the false hope of some resemblance,
either

To make their own intrigues seem inno-
cent,

Or else to make their neighbors share
the blame

Which they are loaded with by every-
body.

MME. PER. These arguments are
nothing to the purpose.

Orante, we all know, lives a perfect-
life;

Her thoughts are all of heaven; and I
have heard

That she condemns the company you
keep.

DOR. O admirable pattern! Virtu-
ous dame!

She lives the model of austerity;
But age has brought this piety upon

her,
And she's a prude, now she can't help
herself.

As long as she could capture men's at-
tentions

She made the most of her advantages;
But, now she sees her beauty vanishing,

She wants to leave the world, that's
leaving her,

And in the specious veil of haughty
virtue

She'd hide the weakness of her worn-
out charms.

That is the way with all your old
coquettes,

They find it hard to see their lovers
leave 'em;

And thus abandoned, their forlorn
estate

Can find no occupation but a prude's.
These pious dames, in their austerity,

Must carp at everything, and pardon
nothing.

They loudly blame their neighbors' way
of living,

Not for religion's sake, but out of
envy,

Because they can't endure to see an-
other

Enjoy the pleasures age has weaned
them from.

MME. PER. [*to ELMIRE.*] There!
That's the kind of rigmarole to

please you,
Daughter-in-law. One never has a

chance
To get a word in edgewise, at your

house,

Because this lady holds the floor all day;
 But none the less, I mean to have my say, too.
 I tell you that my son did nothing wiser
 In all his life, than take this godly man
 Into his household; Heaven sent him here,
 In your great need, to make you all repent;
 For your salvation, you must hearken to him;
 He censures nothing but deserves his censure.
 These visits, these assemblies, and these balls,
 Are all inventions of the evil spirit.
 You never hear a word of godliness
 At them—but idle cackle, nonsense, flim-flam.
 Our neighbor often comes in for a share,
 The talk flies fast, and scandal fills the air;
 It makes a sober person's head go round,
 At these assemblies, just to hear the sound
 Of so much gab, with not a word to say;
 And as a learned man remarked one day
 Most aptly, 'tis the Tower of Babylon,
 Where all, beyond all limit, babble on.
 And just to tell you how this point came in . . .
 [To CLÉANTE.] So! Now the gentleman must snicker, must he?
 Go find fools like yourself to make you laugh
 And don't . . .
 [To ELMIRE.] Daughter, good-bye; not one word more.
 As for this house, I leave the half unsaid;
 But I shan't soon set foot in it again.
 [Cuffing FLIPOTTE.] Come, you! What makes you dream and stand agape,
 Hussy! I'll warm your ears in proper shapel
 March, trollop, march!
 [Exeunt all but CLÉANTE, DORINE.]
 CLÉ. I won't escort her down,

For fear she might fall foul of me again;
 The good old lady . . .
 Dor. Bless us! What a pity
 She shouldn't hear the way you speak of her!
 She'd surely tell you you're too "good" by half,
 And that she's not so "old" as all that, neither!
 CLÉ. How she got angry with us, all for nothing!
 And how she seems possessed with her Tartuffe!
 Dor. Her case is nothing, though, beside her son's!
 To see him, you would say he's ten times worse!
 His conduct in our late unpleasantness
 Had won him much esteem, and proved his courage
 In service of his king; but now he's like
 A man besotted, since he's been so taken
 With this Tartuffe. He calls him brother, loves him
 A hundred times as much as mother, son,
 Daughter, and wife. He tells him all his secrets
 And lets him guide his acts, and rule his conscience.
 He fondles and embraces him; a sweet-heart
 Could not, I think, be loved more tenderly;
 At table he must have the seat of honor,
 While with delight our master sees him eat
 As much as six men could; we must give up
 The choicest tidbits to him; if he belches,
 Master exclaims: "God bless you!"—
 Oh, he dotes
 Upon him; he's his universe, his hero;
 He's lost in constant admiration, quotes him
 On all occasions, takes his trifling acts
 For wonders, and his words for oracles.
 The fellow knows his dupe, and makes the most on't,

He fools him with a hundred masks of
 virtue,
 Gets money from him all the time by
 canting,
 And takes upon himself to carp at us.
 Even his silly coxcomb of a lackey
 Makes it his business to instruct us too;
 He comes with rolling eyes to preach
 at us,
 And throws away our ribbons, rouge,
 and patches.
 The wretch, the other day, tore up a
 kerchief
 That he had found, pressed in the
Golden Legend,
 Calling it horrid crime for us to mingle
 The devil's finery with holy things.

[Enter ELMIRE, MARIANE, DAMIS.]

ELM. [to CLÉANTE.] You're very
 lucky to have missed the speech
 She gave us at the door. I see my hus-
 band
 Is home again. He hasn't seen me yet,
 So I'll go up and wait till he comes in.
 CLÉ. And I, to save time, will await
 him here;
 I'll merely say good-morning, and be
 gone.

[Exeunt ELMIRE and MARIANE.]

DAM. I wish you'd say a word to
 him about
 My sister's marriage; I suspect Tar-
 tuffe
 Opposes it, and puts my father up
 To all these wretched shifts. You
 know, besides,
 How nearly I'm concerned in it myself;
 If love unites my sister and Valère,
 I love his sister too; and if this mar-
 riage
 Were to . . .

DOR. He's coming. [Exit DAMIS.]

[Enter ORGON.]

ORG. Ah! Good-morning, brother.
 CLÉ. I was just going, but am glad
 to greet you.
 Things are not far advanced yet, in
 the country?
 ORG. Dorine . . .
 [To CLÉANTE.] Just wait a bit, please,
 brother-in-law.

Let me allay my first anxiety
 By asking news about the family.
 [To DORINE.] Has everything gone
 well these last two days?
 What's happening? And how is every-
 body?

DOR. Madam had fever, and a split-
 ting headache
 Day before yesterday, all day and eve-
 ning.

ORG. And how about Tartuffe?

DOR. Tartuffe? He's well;
 He's mighty well; stout, fat, fair, rosy-
 lipped.

ORG. Poor man!

DOR. At evening she had nausea
 And couldn't touch a single thing for
 supper,

Her headache still was so severe.

ORG. And how
 About Tartuffe?

DOR. He supped alone, before her,
 And unctuously ate up two partridges,
 As well as half a leg o' mutton, deviled.

ORG. Poor man!

DOR. All night she couldn't get a
 wink
 Of sleep, the fever racked her so; and
 we
 Had to sit up with her till daylight.

ORG. How
 About Tartuffe?

DOR. Gently inclined to slumber,
 He left the table, went into his room,
 Got himself straight into a good warm
 bed,
 And slept quite undisturbed until next
 morning.

ORG. Poor man!

DOR. At last she let us all persuade
 her,
 And got up courage to be bled; and
 then

She was relieved at once.

ORG. And how about
 Tartuffe?

DOR. He plucked up courage prop-
 erly,
 Bravely entrenched his soul against all
 evils,
 And, to replace the blood that she had
 lost,
 He drank at breakfast four huge
 draughts of wine.

ORG. Poor man!

DOR. So now they both are doing well;
And I'll go straightway and inform my mistress
How pleased you are at her recovery.

[Exit DORINE.]

CLÉ. Brother, she ridicules you to your face;
And I, though I don't want to make you angry,
Must tell you candidly that she's quite right.
Was such infatuation ever heard of?
And can a man to-day have charms to make you
Forget all else, relieve his poverty,
Give him a home, and then . . . ?

ORG. Stop there, good brother,
You do not know the man you're speaking of.

CLÉ. Since you will have it so, I do not know him;
But after all, to tell what sort of man He is . . .

ORG. Dear brother, you'd be charmed to know him;
Your raptures over him would have no end.

He is a man . . . who . . . ah! . . . in fact . . . a man.

Whoever does his will, knows perfect peace,

And counts the whole world else, as so much dung.

His converse has transformed me quite; he weans

My heart from every friendship, teaches me

To have no love for anything on earth;
And I could see my brother, children, mother,

And wife, all die, and never care—a snap.

CLÉ. Your feelings are humane, I must say, brother!

ORG. Ah! If you'd seen him, as I saw him first,
You would have loved him just as much as I.

He came to church each day, with contrite mien,

Kneeled, on both knees, right opposite my place,

And drew the eyes of all the congregation,

To watch the fervor of his prayers to heaven;

With deep-drawn sighs and great ejaculations,

He humbly kissed the earth at every moment;

And when I left the church, he ran before me

To give me holy water at the door.

I learned his poverty, and who he was,
By questioning his servant, who is like him,

And gave him gifts; but in his modesty He always wanted to return a part.

"It is too much," he'd say, "too much by half;

I am not worthy of your pity." Then, When I refused to take it back, he'd go,

Before my eyes, and give it to the poor.

At length Heaven bade me take him to my home,

And since that day, all seems to prosper here.

He censures everything, and for my sake

He even takes great interest in my wife;

He lets me know who ogles her, and seems

Six times as jealous as I am myself.

You'd not believe how far his zeal can go:

He calls himself a sinner just for trifles;
The merest nothing is enough to shock him;

So much so, that the other day I heard him

Accuse himself for having, while at prayer,

In too much anger caught and killed a flea.

CLÉ. Zounds, brother, you are mad, I think! Or else

You're making sport of me, with such a speech.

What are you driving at with all this nonsense . . . ?

ORG. Brother, your language smacks of atheism;

And I suspect your soul's a little tainted

Therewith. I've preached to you a score of times

That you'll draw down some judgment on your head.

CLÉ. That is the usual strain of all your kind:

They must have every one as blind as they.

They call you atheist if you have good eyes;

And if you don't adore their vain grimaces,

You've neither faith nor care for sacred things.

No, no; such talk can't frighten me; I know

What I am saying; Heaven sees my heart.

We're not the dupes of all your canting mummers;

There are false heroes—and false devotees;

And as true heroes never are the ones Who make much noise about their deeds of honor,

Just so true devotees, whom we should follow,

Are not the ones who make so much vain show.

What! Will you find no difference between

Hypocrisy and genuine devoutness?

And will you treat them both alike, and pay

The selfsame honor both to masks and faces,

Set artifice beside sincerity,

Confuse the semblance with reality,

Esteem a phantom like a living person,

And counterfeit as good as honest coin?

Men, for the most part, are strange creatures, truly!

You never find them keep the golden mean;

The limits of good sense, too narrow for them,

Must always be passed by, in each direction;

They often spoil the noblest things, because

They go too far, and push them to extremes.

I merely say this by the way, good brother.

ORG. You are the sole expounder of the doctrine;

Wisdom shall die with you, no doubt, good brother,

You are the only wise, the sole enlightened,

The oracle, the Cato, of our age.

All men, compared to you, are downright fools.

CLÉ. I'm not the sole expounder of the doctrine,

And wisdom shall not die with me, good brother.

But this I know, though it be all my knowledge,

That there's a difference 'twixt false and true.

And as I find no kind of hero more

To be admired than men of true religion,

Nothing more noble or more beautiful Than is the holy zeal of true devoutness;

Just so I think there's naught more odious

Than whited sepulchers of outward unction,

Those barefaced charlatans, those hireling zealots,

Whose sacrilegious, treacherous pretense

Deceives at will, and with impunity

Makes mockery of all that men hold sacred;

Men who, enslaved to selfish interests, Make trade and merchandise of godliness,

And try to purchase influence and office With false eye-rollings and affected raptures;

Those men, I say, who with uncommon zeal

Seek their own fortunes on the road to heaven;

Who, skilled in prayer, have always much to ask,

And live at court to preach retirement;

Who reconcile religion with their vices, Are quick to anger, vengeful, faithless,

tricky,

And, to destroy a man, will have the boldness

To call their private grudge the cause of Heaven;

All the more dangerous, since in their
 anger
 They use against us weapons men
 revere,
 And since they make the world applaud
 their passion,
 And seek to stab us with a sacred
 sword.
 There are too many of this canting
 kind.
 Still, the sincere are easy to distin-
 guish;
 And many splendid patterns may be
 found,
 In our own time, before our very
 eyes.
 Look at Ariston, Périandre, Oronte,
 Alcidas, Clitandre, and Polydore;
 No one denies their claim to true re-
 ligion;
 Yet they're no braggadocios of virtue,
 They do not make insufferable display,
 And their religion's human, tractable;
 They are not always judging all our
 actions,
 They'd think such judgment savored
 of presumption;
 And, leaving pride of words to other
 men,
 'Tis by their deeds alone they censure
 ours.
 Evil appearances find little credit
 With them; they even incline to think
 the best
 Of others. No cabalers, no intriguers,
 They mind the business of their own
 right living.
 They don't attack a sinner tooth and
 nail,
 For sin's the only object of their
 hatred;
 Nor are they overzealous to attempt
 Far more in Heaven's behalf than
 Heaven would have 'em.
 That is my kind of man, that is true
 living,
 That is the pattern we should set our-
 selves.
 Your fellow was not fashioned on this
 model;
 You're quite sincere in boasting of his
 zeal;
 But you're deceived, I think, by false
 pretenses.

ORG. My dear good brother-in-law,
 have you quite done?
 CLÉ. Yes.
 ORG. I'm your humble servant.
 [Starts to go.]
 CLÉ. Just a word.
 We'll drop that other subject. But
 you know
 Valère has had the promise of your
 daughter.
 ORG. Yes.
 CLÉ. You had named the happy
 day.
 ORG. 'Tis true.
 CLÉ. Then why put off the celebra-
 tion of it?
 ORG. I can't say.
 CLÉ. Can you have some other
 plan
 In mind?
 ORG. Perhaps.
 CLÉ. You mean to break your word?
 ORG. I don't say that.
 CLÉ. I hope no obstacle
 Can keep you from performing what
 you've promised.
 ORG. Well, that depends.
 CLÉ. Why must you beat about?
 Valère has sent me here to settle
 matters.
 ORG. Heaven be praised!
 CLÉ. What answer shall I take him?
 ORG. Why, anything you please.
 CLÉ. But we must know
 Your plans. What are they?
 ORG. I shall do the will
 Of Heaven.
 CLÉ. Come, be serious. You've
 given
 Your promise to Valère. Now will you
 keep it?
 ORG. Good-bye. [Exit.]
 CLÉ. [alone.] His love, methinks,
 has much to fear;
 I must go let him know what's happen-
 ing here. [Exit.]

ACT II

[Enter ORGON and MARIANE.]

ORG. Now, Mariane.

MAR. Yes, father?

ORG. Come: I'll tell you
A secret.

MAR. Yes . . . What are you looking for?

ORG. [*looking into a small closet-room.*] To see there's no one there to spy upon us;

That little closet's mighty fit to hide in.
There! We're all right now. Mariane, in you

I've always found a daughter dutiful
And gentle. So I've always loved you dearly.

MAR. I'm grateful for your fatherly affection.

ORG. Well spoken, daughter. Now, prove you deserve it
By doing as I wish in all respects.

MAR. To do so is the height of my ambition.

ORG. Excellent well. What say you of—Tartuffe?

MAR. Who? I?

ORG. Yes, you. Look to it how you answer.

MAR. Why! I'll say of him—anything you please.

[*DORINE enters quietly, and stands behind ORGON, so that he does not see her.*]

ORG. Well spoken. A good girl.
Say then, my daughter,
That all his person shines with noble merit,
That he has won your heart, and you would like
To have him, by my choice, become
your husband.

Eh?

MAR. Eh?

ORG. What say you?

MAR. Please, what did you say?

ORG. What?

MAR. Surely I mistook you, sir?

ORG. How now?

MAR. Who is it, father, you would have me say
Has won my heart, and I would like to have
Become my husband, by your choice?

ORG. Tartuffe.

MAR. But, father, I protest it isn't true!

Why should you make me tell this dreadful lie?

ORG. Because I mean to have it be the truth.

Let this suffice for you: I've settled it.

MAR. What, father, you would . . .

ORG. Yes, child, I'm resolved
To graft Tartuffe into my family.
So he must be your husband. That I've settled.

And since your duty . . .
[*Seeing DORINE.*] What are you doing there?

Your curiosity is keen, my girl,
To make you come eavesdropping on us so.

DOR. Upon my word, I don't know how the rumor
Got started—if 'twas guesswork or mere chance—

But I had heard already of this match,
And treated it as utter stuff and nonsense.

ORG. What! Is the thing incredible?

DOR. So much so
I don't believe it even from yourself, sir.

ORG. I know a way to make you credit it.

DOR. No, no, you're telling us a fairy tale!

ORG. I'm telling you just what will happen shortly.

DOR. Stuff!

ORG. Daughter, what I say is in good earnest.

DOR. There, there, don't take your father seriously;
He's fooling.

ORG. But I tell you . . .

DOR. No. No use.

They won't believe you.

ORG. If I let my anger . . .

DOR. Well, then, we do believe you;
and the worse
For you it is. What! Can a grown-up man

With that expanse of beard across his face

Be mad enough to want . . . ?

ORG. You hark to me:
You've taken on yourself here in this house

A sort of free familiarity
That I don't like, I tell you frankly,
girl.

DOR. There, there, let's not get
angry, sir, I beg you.

But are you making game of every-
body?

Your daughter's not cut out for bigot's
meat;

And he has more important things to
think of.

Besides, what can you gain by such a
match?

How can a man of wealth, like you, go
choose

A wretched vagabond for son-in-law?

ORG. You hold your tongue. And
know, the less he has,

The better cause have we to honor him.
His poverty is honest poverty;

It should exalt him more than worldly
grandeur,

For he has let himself be robbed of all,
Through careless disregard of temporal
things

And fixed attachment to the things
eternal.

My help may set him on his feet again,
Win back his property—a fair estate

He has at home, so I'm informed—and
prove him

For what he is, a true-born gentleman.

DOR. Yes, so he says himself. Such
vanity

But ill accords with pious living, sir.

The man who cares for holiness alone
Should not so loudly boast his name
and birth;

The humble ways of genuine devout-
ness

Brook not so much display of earthly
pride.

Why should he be so vain? . . . But I
offend you:

Let's leave his rank, then,—take the
man himself:

Can you without compunction give a
man

Like him possession of a girl like her!
Think what a scandal's sure to come of
it!

Virtue is at the mercy of the fates,
When a girl's married to a man she
hates;

The best intent to live an honest woman
Depends upon the husband's being hu-
man,

And men whose brows are pointed at
afar

May thank themselves their wives are
what they are.

For to be true is more than woman
can,

With husbands built upon a certain
plan;

And he who weds his child against her
will

Owes Heaven account for it, if she do
ill.

Think then what perils wait on your
design.

ORG. [to MARIANE.] So! I must
learn what's what from her, you
see!

DOR. You might do worse than fol-
low my advice.

ORG. Daughter, we can't waste time
upon this nonsense;

I know what's good for you, and I'm
your father.

True, I had promised you to young
Valère;

But, first, they tell me he's inclined to
gamble,

And then, I fear his faith is not quite
sound.

I haven't noticed that he's regular
At church.

DOR. You'd have him run there just
when you do,

Like those who go on purpose to be
seen?

ORG. I don't ask your opinion on the
matter.

In short, the other is in Heaven's best
graces,

And that is riches quite beyond com-
pare.

This match will bring you every joy
you long for;

'Twill be all steeped in sweetness and
delight.

You'll live together, in your faithful
loves,

Like two sweet children, like two
turtledoves;

You'll never fall to quarrel, scold, or
tease,

And you may do with him whate'er you please.

DOR. With him? Do naught but give him horns, I'll warrant.

ORG. Out on the wench!

DOR. I tell you he's cut out for 't; However great your daughter's virtue, sir,

His destiny is sure to prove the stronger.

ORG. Have done with interrupting. Hold your tongue.

Don't poke your nose in other people's business.

DOR. *[she keeps interrupting him, just as he turns and starts to speak to his daughter.]* If I make bold, sir, 'tis for your own good.

ORG. You're too officious; pray you, hold your tongue.

DOR. 'Tis love of you . . .

ORG. I want none of your love.

DOR. Then I will love you in your own despite.

ORG. You will, eh?

DOR. Yes, your honor's dear to me; I can't endure to see you made the butt Of all men's ridicule.

ORG. Won't you be still?

DOR. 'Twould be a sin to let you make this match.

ORG. Won't you be still, I say, you impudent viper!

DOR. What! you are pious, and you lose your temper?

ORG. I'm all wrought up, with your confounded nonsense;

Now, once for all, I tell you hold your tongue.

DOR. Then mum's the word; I'll take it out in thinking.

ORG. Think all you please; but not a syllable

To me about it, or . . . you understand!

[Turning to his daughter.] As a wise father, I've considered all With due deliberation.

DOR. I'll go mad If I can't speak.

[She stops the instant he turns his head.]

ORG. Though he's no lady's man,

Tartuffe is well enough . . .

DOR. A pretty phiz!

ORG. So that, although you may not care at all

For his best qualities . . .

DOR. A handsome dowry!

[ORGON turns and stands in front of her, with arms folded, eyeing her.]

Were I in her place, any man should rue it

Who married me by force, that's mighty certain;

I'd let him know, and that within a week,

A woman's vengeance isn't far to seek.

ORG. *[to DORINE.]* So—nothing that I say has any weight?

DOR. Eh? What's wrong now? I didn't speak to you.

ORG. What were you doing?

DOR. Talking to myself.

ORG. Oh! Very well. *[aside.]* Her monstrous impudence

Must be chastised with one good slap in the face.

[He stands ready to strike her, and, each time he speaks to his daughter, he glances toward her; but she stands still and says not a word.]

ORG. Daughter, you must approve of my design. . . .

Think of this husband . . . I have chosen for you . . .

[To DORINE.] Why don't you talk to yourself?

DOR. Nothing to say.

ORG. One little word more.

DOR. Oh, no thanks. Not now.

ORG. Sure, I'd have caught you.

DOR. Faith, I'm no such fool.

ORG. So, daughter, now obedience is the word;

You must accept my choice with reverence.

DOR. *[running away.]* You'd never catch me marrying such a creature.

ORG. *[swinging his hand at her and missing her.]* Daughter, you've such a pestilent hussy there

I can't live with her longer without sin.

I can't discuss things in the state I'm
in.
My mind's so flustered by her insolent
talk,
To calm myself, I must go take a walk.

[Exit.]

DOR. Say, have you lost the tongue
from out your head?
And must I speak your rôle from A to
Zed?

You let them broach a project that's
absurd,

And don't oppose it with a single word!

MAR. What can I do? My father is
the master.

DOR. Do? Everything, to ward off
such disaster.

MAR. But what?

DOR. Tell him one doesn't love by
proxy;

Tell him you'll marry for yourself, not
him;

Since you're the one for whom the thing
is done,

You are the one, not he, the man must
please;

If his Tartuffe has charmed him so,
why let him

Just marry him himself—no one will
hinder.

MAR. A father's rights are such, it
seems to me,

That I could never dare to say a word.

DOR. Come, talk it out. Valère has
asked your hand:

Now do you love him, pray, or do you
not?

MAR. Dorine! How can you wrong
my love so much,

And ask me such a question? Have I
not

A hundred times laid bare my heart to
you?

Do you not know how ardently I love
him?

DOR. How do I know if heart and
words agree,

And if in honest truth you really love
him?

MAR. Dorine, you wrong me greatly
if you doubt it;

I've shown my inmost feelings, all too
plainly.

DOR. So then, you love him?

MAR. Yes, devotedly.

DOR. And he returns your love, ap-
parently?

MAR. I think so.

DOR. And you both alike are eager
To be well married to each other?

MAR. Surely.

DOR. Then what's your plan about
this other match?

MAR. To kill myself, if it is forced
upon me.

DOR. Good! That's a remedy I
hadn't thought of.

Just die, and everything will be all
right.

This medicine is marvelous, indeed!
It drives me mad to hear folk talk such
nonsense.

MAR. Oh, dear, Dorine, you get in
such a temper!

You have no sympathy for people's
troubles.

DOR. I have no sympathy when folk
talk nonsense,

And flatten out as you do, at a pinch.

MAR. But what can you expect?—
if one is timid?—

DOR. But what is love worth, if it
has no courage?

MAR. Am I not constant in my love
for him?

Is 't not his place to win me from my
father?

DOR. But if your father is a crazy
fool,

And quite bewitched with his Tartuffe?
And breaks

His bounden word? Is that your
lover's fault?

MAR. But shall I publicly refuse
and scorn

This match, and make it plain that I'm
in love?

Shall I cast off for him, whate'er he
be,

Womanly modesty and filial duty?
You ask me to display my love in pub-
lic . . . ?

DOR. No, no, I ask you nothing.
You shall be

Mister Tartuffe's; why, now I think
of it,

I should be wrong to turn you from
this marriage.

What cause can I have to oppose your wishes?

So fine a match! An excellent good match!

Mister Tartuffe! Oh ho! No mean proposal!

Mister Tartuffe, sure, take it all in all, Is not a man to sneeze at—oh, by no means!

'Tis no small luck to be his happy spouse.

The whole world joins to sing his praise already;

He's noble—in his parish; handsome too;

Red ears, and high complexion—oh, my lud!

You'll be too happy, sure, with him for husband.

MAR. Oh, dear! . . .

DOR. What joy and pride will fill your heart

To be the bride of such a handsome fellow!

MAR. Oh, stop, I beg you; try to find some way

To help break off the match. I quite give in,

I'm ready to do anything you say.

DOR. No, no, a daughter must obey her father,

Though he should want to make her wed a monkey.

Besides, your fate is fine: What could be better!

You'll take the stage-coach to his little village,

And find it full of uncles and of cousins,

Whose conversation will delight you. Then

You'll be presented in their best society. You'll even go to call, by way of welcome,

On Mrs. Bailiff, Mrs. Tax-Collector, Who'll patronize you with a folding-stool.

There, once a year, at carnival, you'll have—

Perhaps—a ball; with orchestra—two bag-pipes;

And sometimes a trained ape, and Punch and Judy;

Though if your husband . . .

MAR. Oh, you'll kill me. Please Contrive to help me out with your advice.

DOR. I thank you kindly.

MAR. Oh! Dorine, I beg you . . .

DOR. To serve you right, this marriage must go through.

MAR. Dear girl!

DOR. No.

MAR. If I say I love Valère . . .

DOR. No, no. Tartuffe's your man, and you shall taste him.

MAR. You know I've always trusted you; now help me . . .

DOR. No, you shall be, my faith! Tartuffified.

MAR. Well, then, since you've no pity for my fate

Let me take counsel only of despair; It will advise and help and give me courage;

There's one sure cure, I know, for all my troubles.

[*She starts to go.*]

DOR. There, there! Come back. I can't be angry long.

I must take pity on you, after all.

MAR. Oh, don't you see, Dorine, if I must bear

This martyrdom, I certainly shall die.

DOR. Now don't you fret. We'll surely find some way

To hinder this . . . But here's Valère, your lover.

[*Enter VALÈRE.*]

VAL. Madam, a piece of news—quite new to me—

Has just come out, and very fine it is.

MAR. What piece of news?

VAL. Your marriage with Tartuffe.

MAR. 'Tis true my father has this plan in mind.

VAL. Your father, madam . . .

MAR. Yes, he's changed his plans, And did but now propose it to me.

VAL. What!

Seriously?

MAR. Yes, he was serious,

And openly insisted on the match.

VAL. And what's your resolution in the matter,

Madam?

MAR. I don't know.

VAL. That's a pretty answer.
 You don't know?
 MAR. No.
 VAL. No?
 MAR. What do you advise?
 VAL. I? My advice is, marry him,
 by all means.
 MAR. That's your advice?
 VAL. Yes.
 MAR. Do you mean it?
 VAL. Surely.
 A splendid choice, and worthy your acceptance.
 MAR. Oh, very well, sir! I shall
 take your counsel.
 VAL. You'll find no trouble taking
 it, I warrant.
 MAR. No more than you did giving
 it, be sure.
 VAL. I gave it, truly, to oblige you,
 madam.
 MAR. And I shall take it to oblige
 you, sir.
 DOR. [*withdrawing to the back of
 the stage.*] Let's see what this
 affair will come to.
 VAL. So.
 That is your love? And it was all
 deceit
 When you . . .
 MAR. I beg you, say no more of
 that.
 You told me, squarely, sir, I should
 accept
 The husband that is offered me; and I
 Will tell you squarely that I mean to
 do so,
 Since you have given me this good
 advice.
 VAL. Don't shield yourself with talk
 of my advice.
 You had your mind made up, that's
 evident;
 And now you're snatching at a trifling
 pretext
 To justify the breaking of your word.
 MAR. Exactly so.
 VAL. Of course it is; your heart
 Has never known true love for me.
 MAR. Alas!
 You're free to think so, if you please.
 VAL. Yes, yes,
 I'm free to think so; and my outraged
 love

May yet forestall you in your perfidy,
 And offer elsewhere both my heart and
 hand.
 MAR. No doubt of it; the love your
 high deserts
 May win . . .
 VAL. Good Lord, have done with
 my deserts!
 I know I have but few, and you have
 proved it.
 But I may find more kindness in an-
 other;
 I know of some one, who'll not be
 ashamed
 To take your leavings, and make up
 my loss.
 MAR. The loss is not so great; you'll
 easily
 Console yourself completely for this
 change.
 VAL. I'll try my best, that you may
 well believe.
 When we're forgotten by a woman's
 heart,
 Our pride is challenged; we, too, must
 forget;
 Or if we cannot, must at least pretend
 to.
 No other way can man such baseness
 prove,
 As be a lover scorned, and still in love.
 MAR. In faith, a high and noble
 sentiment.
 VAL. Yes; and it's one that all men
 must approve.
 What! Would you have me keep my
 love alive,
 And see you fly into another's arms
 Before my very eyes; and never offer
 To some one else the heart that you
 had scorned?
 MAR. Oh, no, indeed! For my part,
 I could wish
 That it were done already.
 VAL. What! You wish it?
 MAR. Yes.
 VAL. This is insult heaped on in-
 jury;
 I'll go at once and do as you desire.
 [*He takes a step or
 two as if to go away.*]
 MAR. Oh, very well then.
 VAL. [*turning back.*] But remember
 this:

'Twas you that drove me to this desperate pass.

MAR. Of course.

VAL. [*turning back again.*] And in the plan that I have formed I only follow your example.

MAR. Yes.

VAL. [*at the door.*] Enough; you shall be punctually obeyed.

MAR. So much the better.

VAL. [*coming back again.*] This is once for all.

MAR. So be it, then.

VAL. [*going toward the door, but just as he reaches it, turning around.*] Eh?

MAR. What?

VAL. You didn't call me?

MAR. I? You are dreaming.

VAL. Very well, I'm gone.

Madam, farewell.

[*He walks slowly away.*]

MAR. Farewell, sir.

DOR. I must say

You've lost your senses and both gone clean daft!

I've let you fight it out to the end o' the chapter

To see how far the thing could go. Oho, there,

Mister Valère!

[*She goes and seizes him by the arm, to stop him. He makes a great show of resistance.*]

VAL. What do you want, Dorine?

DOR. Come here.

VAL. No, no, I'm quite beside myself.

Don't hinder me from doing as she wishes.

DOR. Stop!

VAL. No. You see, I'm fixed, resolved, determined.

DOR. So!

MAR. [*aside.*] Since my presence pains him, makes him go, I'd better go myself, and leave him free.

DOR. [*leaving VALÈRE, and running after MARIANE.*] Now 't other!

Where are you going?

MAR. Let me be.

DOR. Come back.

MAR. No, no, it isn't any use.

VAL. [*aside.*] 'Tis clear the sight of me is torture to her;

No doubt, 'twere better I should free her from it.

DOR. [*leaving MARIANE, and running after VALÈRE.*] Same thing again! Deuce take you both, I say.

Now stop your fooling; come here, you; and you.

[*She pulls first one, then the other toward the middle of the stage.*]

VAL. [*to DORINE.*] What's your idea?

MAR. [*to DORINE.*] What can you mean to do?

DOR. Set you to rights, and pull you out o' the scrape.

[*To VALÈRE.*] Are you quite mad, to quarrel with her now?

VAL. Didn't you hear the things she said to me?

DOR. [*to MARIANE.*] Are you quite mad, to get in such a passion?

MAR. Didn't you see the way he treated me?

DOR. Fools, both of you.

[*To VALÈRE.*] She thinks of nothing else

But to keep faith with you, I vouch for it.

[*To MARIANE.*] And he loves none but you, and longs for nothing

But just to marry you, I stake my life on't.

MAR. [*to VALÈRE.*] Why did you give me such advice then, pray?

VAL. [*to MARIANE.*] Why ask for my advice on such a matter?

DOR. You both are daft, I tell you. Here, your hands.

[*To VALÈRE.*] Come, yours.

VAL. [*giving DORINE his hand.*] What for?

DOR. [*to MARIANE.*] Now, yours.

MARIANE [*giving DORINE her hand.*] But what's the use?

DOR. Oh, quick now, come along. There, both of you—

You love each other better than you think.

[*VALÈRE and MARIANE hold each other's hands some time without looking at each other.*]

VAL. [*at last turning toward MARIANE.*] Come, don't be so ungracious now about it;
Look at a man as if you didn't hate him.

[*MARIANE looks sideways toward VALÈRE, with just a bit of a smile.*]

DOR. My faith and troth, what fools these lovers be!

VAL. [*to MARIANE.*] But come now, have I not a just complaint?
And truly, are you not a wicked creature

To take delight in saying what would pain me?

MAR. And are you not yourself the most ungrateful . . . ?

DOR. Leave this discussion till another time;

Now, think how you'll stave off this plaguey marriage.

MAR. Then tell us how to go about it.

DOR. Well,

We'll try all sorts of ways.

[*To MARIANE.*] Your father's daft.

[*To VALÈRE.*] This plan is nonsense.

[*To MARIANE.*] You had better humor His notions by a semblance of consent, So that in case of danger, you can still

Find means to block the marriage by delay.

If you gain time, the rest is easy, trust me.

One day you'll fool them with a sudden illness,

Causing delay; another day, ill omens: You've met a funeral, or broke a mirror, Or dreamed of muddy water. Best of all,

They cannot marry you to any one Without your saying yes. But now, methinks,

They mustn't find you chattering together.

[*To VALÈRE.*] You, go at once and set your friends at work

To makè him keep his word to you; while we

Will bring the brother's influence to bear,

And get the stepmother on our side, too. Good-bye.

VAL. [*to MARIANE.*] Whatever efforts we may make,
My greatest hope, be sure, must rest on you.

MAR. [*to VALÈRE.*] I cannot answer for my father's whims;
But no one save Valère shall ever have me.

VAL. You thrill me through with joy! Whatever comes . . .

DOR. Oho! These lovers! Never done with prattling!

Now, go.

VAL. [*starting to go, and coming back again.*] One last word . . .

DOR. What a gabble and pother! Be off! By this door, you. And you, by t'other.

[*She pushes them off, by the shoulders, in opposite directions.*]

ACT III

[*Enter DAMIS and DORINE.*]

DAM. May lightning strike me dead this very instant,
May I be everywhere proclaimed a scoundrel,

If any reverence or power shall stop me,

And if I don't do straightway something desperate!

DOR. I beg you, moderate this towering passion;

Your father did but merely mention it. Not all things that are talked of turn

to facts;
The road is long, sometimes, from plans to acts.

DAM. No, I must end this paltry fellow's plots,

And he shall hear from me a truth or two.

DOR. So ho! Go slow now. Just you leave the fellow—

Your father too—in your stepmother's hands.

She has some influence with this Tartuffe,

He makes a point of heeding all she says,

And I suspect that he is fond of her.

Would God 'twere true!—'Twould be the height of humor.

Now, she has sent for him, in your behalf,

To sound him on this marriage, to find out

What his ideas are, and to show him plainly

What troubles he may cause, if he persists

In giving countenance to this design.

His man says, he's at prayers, I mustn't see him,

But likewise says, he'll presently be down.

So off with you, and let me wait for him.

DAM. I may be present at this interview.

DOR. No, no! They must be left alone.

DAM. I won't

So much as speak to him.

DOR. Go on! We know you

And your high tantrums. Just the way to spoil things!

Be off.

DAM. No, I must see—I'll keep my temper.

DOR. Out on you, what a plague! He's coming. Hide!

[DAMIS goes and hides in the closet at the back of the stage.]

[Enter TARTUFFE.]

TAR. [speaking to his valet, off the stage, as soon as he sees DORINE is there.] Lawrence, put up my haircloth shirt and scourge,

And pray that Heaven may shed its light upon you.

If any come to see me, say I'm gone

To share my alms among the prisoners.

DOR. [aside.] What affectation and what showing off!

TAR. What do you want with me?

DOR. To tell you . . .

TAR. [taking a handkerchief from his pocket.] Ah!

Before you speak, pray take this handkerchief.

DOR. What?

TAR. Cover up that bosom, which I can't

Endure to look on. Things like that offend

Our souls, and fill our minds with sinful thoughts.

DOR. Are you so tender to temptation, then,

And has the flesh such power upon your senses?

I don't know how you get in such a heat;

For my part, I am not so prone to lust, And I could see you stripped from head

to foot, And all your hide not tempt me in the least.

TAR. Show in your speech some little modesty,

Or I must instantly take leave of you.

DOR. No, no, I'll leave you to yourself; I've only

One thing to say: Madam will soon be down,

And begs the favor of a word with you.

TAR. Ah! Willingly.

DOR. [aside.] How gentle all at once!

My faith, I still believe I've hit upon it.

TAR. Will she come soon?

DOR. I think I hear her now.

Yes, here she is herself; I'll leave you with her. [Exit.]

[Enter ELMIRE.]

TAR. May Heaven's overflowing kindness ever

Give you good health of body and of soul,

And bless your days according to the wishes

And prayers of its most humble votary!

ELM. I'm very grateful for your pious wishes.

But let's sit down, so we may talk at ease.

TAR. [after sitting down.] And how are you recovered from your illness?

ELM. [sitting down also.] Quite well; the fever soon let go its hold.

TAR. My prayers, I fear, have not sufficient merit

To have drawn down this favor from on high;

But each entreaty that I made to
Heaven

Had for its object your recovery.

ELM. You're too solicitous on my
behalf.

TAR. We could not cherish your dear
health too much;

I would have given mine, to help re-
store it.

ELM. That's pushing Christian char-
ity too far;

I owe you many thanks for so much
kindness.

TAR. I do far less for you than you
deserve.

ELM. There is a matter that I
wished to speak of

In private; I am glad there's no one
here

To listen.

TAR. Madam, I am overjoyed.

'Tis sweet to find myself alone with
you.

This is an opportunity I've asked
Of Heaven, many a time; till now, in
vain.

ELM. All that I wish, is just a word
from you,

Quite frank and open, hiding nothing
from me.

[DAMIS, without their seeing him,
opens the closet door halfway.]

TAR. I too could wish, as Heaven's
especial favor,

To lay my soul quite open to your eyes,
And swear to you, the trouble that I
made

About those visits which your charms
attract,

Does not result from any hatred toward
you,

But rather from a passionate devotion,
And purest motives . . .

ELM. That is how I take it,

I think 'tis my salvation that concerns
you.

TAR. [*pressing her finger-tips.*]

Madam, 'tis so; and such is my
devotion . . .

ELM. Ouch! but you squeeze too
hard.

TAR. Excess of zeal.

In no way could I ever mean to hurt
you,

And I'd as soon . . .

[*He puts his hand on her knee.*]

ELM. What's your hand doing there?

TAR. Feeling your gown; the stuff
is very soft.

ELM. Let be, I beg you; I am very
ticklish.

[*She moves her chair away, and
TARTUFFE brings his nearer.*]

TAR. [*handling the lace yoke of
ELMIRE's dress.*] Dear me, how
wonderful in workmanship

This lace is! They do marvels, now-
adays;

Things of all kinds were never better
made.

ELMIRE. Yes, very true. But let us
come to business.

They say my husband means to break
his word,

And marry Mariane to you. Is't so?

TAR. He did hint some such thing;
but truly, madam,

That's not the happiness I'm yearning
after;

I see elsewhere the sweet compelling
charms

Of such a joy 'as fills my every
wish.

ELM. You mean you cannot love
terrestrial things.

TAR. The heart within my bosom
is not stone.

ELM. I well believe your sighs all
tend to Heaven,

And nothing here below can stay your
thoughts.

TAR. Love for the beauty of eter-
nal things

Cannot destroy our love for earthly
beauty;

Our mortal senses well may be en-
tranced

By perfect works that Heaven has
fashioned here.

Its charms reflected shine in such as
you,

And in yourself, its rarest miracles;
It has displayed such marvels in your
face,

That eyes are dazed, and hearts are
rapt away;

I could not look on you, the perfect
creature,

Without admiring Nature's great Creator,
And feeling all my heart inflamed with love

For you, His fairest image of Himself.
At first I trembled lest this secret love
Might be the Evil Spirit's artful snare;
I even schooled my heart to flee your beauty,

Thinking it was a bar to my salvation.
But soon, enlightened, O all lovely one,
I saw how this my passion may be blameless,

How I may make it fit with modesty,
And thus completely yield my heart to it.

'Tis, I must own, a great presumption in me

To dare make you the offer of my heart;

My love hopes all things from your perfect goodness,
And nothing from my own poor weak endeavor.

You are my hope, my stay, my peace of heart;

On you depends my torment or my bliss;

And by your doom of judgment, I shall be

Blest, if you will; or damned, by your decree.

ELM. Your declaration's turned most gallantly;

But truly, it is just a bit surprising.
You should have better armed your heart, methinks,

And taken thought somewhat on such a matter.

A pious man like you, known everywhere . . .

TAR. Though pious, I am none the less a man;

And when a man beholds your heavenly charms,

The heart surrenders, and can think no more.

I know such words seem strange, coming from me;

But, madam, I'm no angel, after all;
If you condemn my frankly made avowal

You only have your charming self to blame.

Soon as I saw your more than human beauty,

You were thenceforth the sovereign of my soul;

Sweetness ineffable was in your eyes,
That took by storm my still resisting heart,

And conquered everything, fasts, prayers, and tears,

And turned my worship wholly to yourself.

My looks, my sighs, have spoke a thousand times;

Now, to express it all, my voice must speak.

If but you will look down with gracious favor

Upon the sorrows of your worthless slave,

If in your goodness you will give me comfort

And condescend unto my nothingness,
I'll ever pay you, O sweet miracle,

An unexampled worship and devotion.
Then too, with me your honor runs no risk;

With me you need not fear a public scandal.

These court gallants, that women are so fond of,

Are boastful of their acts, and vain in speech;

They always brag in public of their progress;

Soon as a favor's granted, they'll divulge it;

Their tattling tongues, if you but trust to them,

Will foul the altar where their hearts have worshiped.

But men like me are so discreet in love,
That you may trust their lasting secrecy.

The care we take to guard our own good name

May fully guarantee the one we love;
So you may find, with hearts like ours sincere,

Love without scandal, pleasure without fear.

ELM. I've heard you through—your speech is clear, at least.

But don't you fear that I may take a fancy

To tell my husband of your gallant
passion,
And that a prompt report of this affair
May somewhat change the friendship
which he bears you?

TAR. I know that you're too good
and generous,
That you will pardon my temerity,
Excuse, upon the score of human
frailty,
The violence of passion that offends
you,
And not forget, when you consult your
mirror,
That I'm not blind, and man is made
of flesh.

ELM. Some women might do other-
wise, perhaps,
But I am willing to employ discretion,
And not repeat the matter to my hus-
band;
But in return, I'll ask one thing of you:
That you urge forward, frankly and
sincerely,
The marriage of Valère to Mariane;
That you give up the unjust influence
By which you hope to win another's
rights;
And . . .

DAM. [*coming out of the closet-
room where he had been hiding.*]
No, I say! This thing must be
made public.
I was just there, and overheard it all;
And Heaven's goodness must have
brought me there
On purpose to confound this scoundrel's
pride
And grant me means to take a signal
vengeance
On his hypocrisy and arrogance,
And undeceive my father, showing up
The rascal caught at making love to
you.

ELM. No, no; it is enough if he re-
forms,
Endeavoring to deserve the favor
shown him.
And since I've promised, do not you
believe me.
'Tis not my way to make a public
scandal;
An honest wife will scorn to heed such
follies,

And never fret her husband's ears with
them.

DAM. You've reasons of your own
for acting thus;
And I have mine for doing otherwise.
To spare him now would be a mockery;
His bigot's pride has triumphed all too
long
Over my righteous anger, and has
caused
Far too much trouble in our family.
The rascal all too long has ruled my
father,
And crossed my sister's love, and mine
as well.
The traitor now must be unmasked
before him;
And Providence has given me means
to do it.

To Heaven I owe the opportunity,
And if I did not use it now I have it,
I should deserve to lose it once for all.

ELM. Damis . . .

DAM. No, by your leave; I'll not be
counseled.
I'm overjoyed. You needn't try to tell
me
I must give up the pleasure of revenge.
I'll make an end of this affair at once;
And, to content me, here's my father
now.

[*Enter ORGON.*]

DAM. Father, we've news to wel-
come your arrival,
That's altogether novel, and surprising.
You are well paid for your caressing
care,
And this fine gentleman rewards your
love
Most handsomely, with zeal that seeks
no less
Than your dishonor, as has now been
proven.
I've just surprised him making to your
wife
The shameful offer of a guilty love.
She, somewhat over gentle and discreet,
Insisted that the thing should be con-
cealed;
But I will not condone such shameless-
ness,
Nor so far wrong you as to keep it
secret.

ELM. Yes, I believe a wife should
 never trouble
 Her husband's peace of mind with such
 vain gossip;
 A woman's honor does not hang on
 telling;
 It is enough if she defend herself;
 Or so I think; Damis, you'd not have
 spoken,
 If you would but have heeded my
 advice. . . . [Exit.]

ORG. Just Heaven! Can what I
 hear be credited?

TAR. Yes, brother, I am wicked, I
 am guilty,
 A miserable sinner, steeped in evil,
 The greatest criminal that ever lived.
 Each moment of my life is stained with
 soilures;
 And all is but a mass of crime and filth;
 Heaven, for my punishment, I see it
 plainly,
 Would mortify me now. Whatever
 wrong
 They find to charge me with, I'll not
 deny it
 But guard against the pride of self-
 defense.
 Believe their stories, arm your wrath
 against me,
 And drive me like a villain from your
 house;
 I cannot have so great a share of
 shame
 But what I have deserved a greater
 still.

ORG. [to his son.] You miscreant,
 can you dare, with such a false-
 hood,
 To try to stain the whiteness of his
 virtue?

DAM. What! The feigned meekness
 of this hypocrite
 Makes you discredit . . .

ORG. Silence, cursèd plague!

TAR. Ah! Let him speak; you chide
 him wrongfully;
 You'd do far better to believe his tales.
 Why favor me so much in such a
 matter?
 How can you know of what I'm
 capable?
 And should you trust my outward sem-
 blance, brother,

Or judge therefrom that I'm the better
 man?

No, no; you let appearances deceive
 you;

I'm anything but what I'm thought to
 be,

Alas! and though all men believe me
 godly,

The simple truth is, I'm a worthless
 creature.

[To DAMIS.] Yes, my dear son, say
 on, and call me traitor,

Abandoned scoundrel, thief, and mur-
 derer;

Heap on me names yet more detest-
 able,

And I shall not gainsay you; I've de-
 served them;

I'll bear this ignominy on my knees,
 To expiate in shame the crimes I've
 done.

ORG. [to TARTUFFE.] Ah, brother,
 'tis too much!

[To his son.] You'll not relent,
 You blackguard?

DAM. What! His talk can so de-
 ceive you . . .

ORG. Silence, you scoundrel!

[To TARTUFFE.] Brother, rise, I beg
 you.

[To his son.] Infamous villain!

DAM. Can he . . .

ORG. Silence!

DAM. What . . .

ORG. Another word, I'll break your
 every bone.

TAR. Brother, in God's name, don't
 be angry with him!

I'd rather bear myself the bitterest
 torture

Than have him get a scratch on my
 account.

ORG. [to his son.] Ungrateful mon-
 ster!

TAR. Stop. Upon my knees

I beg you pardon him . . .

ORG. [throwing himself to his knees
 too, and embracing TARTUFFE.]

Alas! How can you?

[To his son.] Villain! Behold his good-
 ness!

DAM. So . . .

ORG. Be still,

DAM. What! I . . .

ORG. Be still, I say. I know your motives.
 For this attack. You hate him, all of you;
 Wife, children, servants, all let loose upon him,
 You have recourse to every shameful trick
 To drive this godly man out of my house;
 The more you strive to rid yourselves of him,
 The more I'll strive to make him stay with me;
 I'll have him straightway married to my daughter,
 Just to confound the pride of all of you.

DAM. What! Will you force her to accept his hand?

ORG. Yes, and this very evening, to enrage you,
 Young rascal! Ah! I'll brave you all, and show you
 That I'm the master, and must be obeyed.

Now, down upon your knees this instant, rogue,
 And take back what you said, and ask his pardon.

DAM. Who? I? Ask pardon of that cheating scoundrel . . . ?

ORG. Do you resist, you beggar, and insult him?
 A cudgel, here! a cudgel!

[To TARTUFFE.] Don't restrain me.
 [To his son.] Off with you! Leave my house this instant, sirrah,
 And never dare set foot in it again.

DAM. Yes, I will leave your house, but . . .

ORG. Leave it quickly.
 You reprobate, I disinherit you,
 And give you, too, my curse into the bargain. [Exit DAMIS.]

What! So insult a saintly man of God!
 TAR. Heaven forgive him all the pain he gives me!

[To ORG.] Could you but know with what distress I see

Them try to vilify me to my brother!
 ORG. Ah!

TAR. The mere thought of such ingratitude

Makes my soul suffer torture, bitterly . . .

My horror at it . . . Ah! my heart's so full

I cannot speak . . . I think I'll die of it.

ORG. [*in tears, running to the door through which he drove away his son.*] Scoundrel! I wish I'd never let you go,

But slain you on the spot with my own hand.

[To TARTUFFE.] Brother, compose yourself, and don't be angry.

TAR. Nay, brother, let us end these painful quarrels.

I see what troublous times I bring upon you,

And think 'tis needful that I leave this house.

ORG. What! You can't mean it?

TAR. Yes, they hate me here,
 And try, I find, to make you doubt my faith.

ORG. What of it? Do you find I listen to them?

TAR. No doubt they won't stop there. These same reports

You now reject, may some day win a hearing.

ORG. No, brother, never.

TAR. Ah! my friend, a woman
 May easily mislead her husband's mind.

ORG. No, no.

TAR. So let me quickly go away
 And thus remove all cause for such attacks.

ORG. No, you shall stay; my life depends upon it.

TAR. Then I must mortify myself.
 And yet,

If you should wish . . .

ORG. No, never!

TAR. Very well then;
 No more of that. But I shall rule my conduct

To fit the case. Honor is delicate,
 And friendship binds me to forestall suspicion,

Prevent all scandal, and avoid your wife.

ORG. No, you shall haunt her, just to spite them all.

'Tis my delight to set them in a rage;
You shall be seen together at all hours;
And what is more, the better to defy
them,

I'll have no other heir but you; and
straightway

I'll go and make a deed of gift to you,
Drawn in due form, of all my property.
A good true friend, my son-in-law to
be,

Is more to me than son, and wife, and
kindred.

You will accept my offer, will you not?

TAR. Heaven's will be done in
everything!

ORG. Poor man.

We'll go make haste to draw the deed
aright,

And then let envy burst itself with
spite! [Exeunt.]

ACT IV

[Enter CLÉANTE and TARTUFFE.]

CLÉ. Yes, it's become the talk of all
the town,

And made a stir that's scarcely to your
credit;

And I have met you, sir, most oppor-
tunely,

To tell you in a word my frank opinion.
Not to sift out this scandal to the
bottom,

Suppose the worst for us—suppose
Damis

Acted the traitor, and accused you
falsely;

Should not a Christian pardon this
offense,

And stifle in his heart all wish for
vengeance?

Should you permit that, for your petty
quarrel,

A son be driven from his father's
house?

I tell you yet again, and tell you
frankly,

Every one, high or low, is scandalized;
If you'll take my advice, you'll make
it up,

And not push matters to extremities.
Make sacrifice to God of your resent-

ment;

Restore the son to favor with his
father.

TAR. Alas! So far as I'm concerned,
how gladly

Would I do so! I bear him no ill-
will;

I pardon all, lay nothing to his charge,
And wish with all my heart that I
might serve him;

But Heaven's interests cannot allow it;
If he returns, then I must leave the
house.

After his conduct, quite unparalleled,
All intercourse between us would bring
scandal;

God knows what every one's first
thought would be!

They would attribute it to merest
scheming

On my part—say that conscious of my
guilt

I feigned a Christian love for my
accuser,

But feared him in my heart, and hoped
to win him

And underhandedly secure his silence.

CLÉ. You try to put us off with
specious phrases;

But all your arguments are too far-
fetched.

Why take upon yourself the cause of
Heaven?

Does Heaven need our help to punish
sinners?

Leave to itself the care of its own
vengeance,

And keep in mind the pardon it com-
mands us;

Besides, think somewhat less of men's
opinions,

When you are following the will of
Heaven.

Shall petty fear of what the world may
think

Prevent the doing of a noble deed?

No!—let us always do as Heaven com-
mands,

And not perplex our brains with further
questions.

TAR. Already I have told you I for-
give him;

And that is doing, sir, as Heaven com-
mands.

But after this day's scandal and affront

Heaven does not order me to live with him.

CLÉ. And does it order you to lend your ear

To what mere whim suggested to his father,

And to accept the gift of his estates,
On which, in justice, you can make no claim?

TAR. No one who knows me, sir,
can have the thought

That I am acting from a selfish motive.
The goods of this world have no charms for me;

I am not dazzled by their treacherous glamor;

And if I bring myself to take the gift
Which he insists on giving me, I do so,

To tell the truth, only because I fear
This whole estate may fall into bad hands,

And those to whom it comes may use it ill

And not employ it, as is my design,
For Heaven's glory and my neighbors' good.

CLÉ. Eh, sir, give up these conscientious scruples

That will may cause a rightful heir's complaints.

Don't take so much upon yourself, but let him

Possess what's his, at his own risk and peril;

Consider, it were better he misused it,
Than you should be accused of robbing him.

I am astounded that unblushingly
You could allow such offers to be made!

Tell me—has true religion any maxim
That teaches us to rob the lawful heir?
If Heaven has made it quite impossible
Damis and you should live together here,

Were it not better you should quietly
And honorably withdraw, than let the son

Be driven out for your sake, dead against

All reason? 'Twould be giving, sir, believe me,

Such an example of your probity . . .

TAR. Sir, it is half-past three; certain devotions

Recall me to my closet; you'll forgive me

For leaving you so soon. [Exit.]

CLÉ. [alone.] Ah!

[Enter ELMIRE, MARIANE, and DORINE.]

DOR. [to CLÉANTE.] Sir, we beg you
To help us all you can in her behalf;
She's suffering almost more than heart can bear;

This match her father means to make to-night

Drives her each moment to despair.
He's coming.

Let us unite our efforts now, we beg you,

And try by strength or skill to change his purpose.

[Enter ORGON.]

ORG. So ho! I'm glad to find you all together.

[To MARIANE.] Here is the contract
that shall make you happy,

My dear. You know already what it means.

MAR. [on her knees before ORGON.]
Father, I beg you, in the name of Heaven

That knows my grief, and by whatever can move you,

Relax a little your paternal rights, and

And free my love from this obedience!
Oh, do not make me, by your harsh command,

Complain to Heaven you ever were my father;

Do not make wretched this poor life you gave me.

If, crossing that fond hope which I had formed,

You'll not permit me to belong to one
Whom I have dared to love, at least, I beg you

Upon my knees, oh, save me from the torment

Of being possessed by one whom I abhor!

And do not drive me to some desperate act

By exercising all your rights upon me.

ORG. [*a little touched.*] Come, come, my heart, be firm! no human weakness!

MAR. I am not jealous of your love for him;

Display it freely; give him your estate, And if that's not enough, add all of mine;

I willingly agree, and give it up, If only you'll not give him me, your daughter;

Oh, rather let a convent's rigid rule Wear out the wretched days that Heaven allots me.

ORG. These girls are ninnies!—always turning nuns

When fathers thwart their silly love-affairs.

Get on your feet! The more you hate to have him,

The more 'twill help you earn your soul's salvation.

So, mortify your senses by this marriage,

And don't vex me about it any more.

DOR. But what . . . ?

ORG. You, hold your tongue, before your betters.

Don't dare to say a single word, I tell you.

CLÉ. If you will let me answer, and advise . . .

ORG. Brother, I value your advice most highly;

'Tis well thought out; no better can be had;

But you'll allow me—not to follow it.

ELM. [*to her husband.*] I can't find words to cope with such a case;

Your blindness makes me quite astounded at you.

You are bewitched with him, to disbelieve

The things we tell you happened here to-day.

ORG. I am your humble servant, and can see

Things, when they're plain as noses on folks' faces.

I know you're partial to my rascal son, And didn't dare to disavow the trick

He tried to play on this poor man; besides,

You were too calm, to be believed; if that

Had happened, you'd have been far more disturbed.

ELM. And must our honor always rush to arms

At the mere mention of illicit love?

Or can we answer no attack upon it Except with blazing eyes and lips of scorn?

For my part, I just laugh away such nonsense;

I've no desire to make a loud to-do.

Our virtue should, I think, be gentle-natured;

Nor can I quite approve those savage prudes

Whose honor arms itself with teeth and claws

To tear men's eyes out at the slightest word.

Heaven preserve me from that kind of honor!

I like my virtue not to be a vixen,

And I believe a quiet cold rebuff

No less effective to repulse a lover.

ORG. I know . . . and you can't throw me off the scent.

ELM. Once more, I am astounded at your weakness;

I wonder what your unbelief would answer,

If I should let you see we've told the truth?

ORG. See it?

ELM. Yes.

ORG. Nonsense.

ELM. Come! If I should find

A way to make you see it clear as day?

ORG. All rubbish.

ELM. What a man! But answer me.

I'm not proposing now that you believe us;

But let's suppose that here, from proper hiding,

You should be made to see and hear all plainly;

What would you say then, to your man of virtue?

ORG. Why, then, I'd say . . . say nothing. It can't be.

ELM. Your error has endured too long already,

And quite too long you've branded me
a liar.

I must at once, for my own satisfac-
tion,

Make you a witness of the things we've
told you.

ORG. Amen! I take you at your
word. We'll see

What tricks you have, and how you'll
keep your promise.

ELM. [*to DORINE.*] Send him to
me.

DOR. [*to ELMIRE.*] The man's a
crafty codger;

Perhaps you'll find it difficult to catch
him.

ELM. [*to DORINE.*] Oh, no! A lover's
never hard to cheat,

And self-conceit leads straight to self-
deceit.

Bid him come down to me.

[*To CLÉANTE and MARIANE.*] And you,
withdraw.

[*Exeunt CLÉANTE and MARIANE.*]

ELM. Bring up this table, and get
under it.

ORG. What?

ELM. One essential is to hide you
well.

ORG. Why under there?

ELM. Oh, dear! Do as I say;

I know what I'm about, as you shall
see.

Get under, now, I tell you; and once
there

Be careful no one either sees or hears
you.

ORG. I'm going a long way to humor
you,

I must say; but I'll see you through
your scheme.

ELM. And then you'll have, I think,
no more to say.

[*To her husband, who is now under
the table.*] But mind, I'm going
to meddle with strange matters;
Prepare yourself to be in no wise
shocked.

Whatever I may say must pass, be-
cause

'Tis only to convince you, as I
promised.

By wheedling speeches, since I'm forced
to do it,

I'll make this hypocrite put off his
mask,

Flatter the longings of his shameless
passion,

And give free play to all his impu-
dence.

But, since 'tis for your sake, to prove
to you

His guilt, that I shall feign to share
his love,

I can leave off as soon as you're con-
vinced,

And things shall go no further than you
choose.

So, when you think they've gone quite
far enough,

It is for you to stop his mad pursuit,
To spare your wife, and not expose me
further

Than you shall need, yourself, to un-
deceive you.

It is your own affair, and you must
end it

When . . . Here he comes. Keep still,
don't show yourself.

[*Enter TARTUFFE.*]

TAR. They told me that you wished
to see me here.

ELM. Yes. I have secrets for your
ear alone.

But shut the door first, and look every-
where

For fear of spies.

[*TARTUFFE goes and closes
the door, and comes back.*]

We surely can't afford

Another scene like that we had just
now;

Was ever any one so caught before!

Damis did frighten me most terribly

On your account; you saw I did my
best

To baffle his design, and calm his
anger.

But I was so confused, I never thought
To contradict his story; still, thank

Heaven,

Things turned out all the better, as it
happened,

And now we're on an even safer foot-
ing.

The high esteem you're held in, laid
the storm;

My husband can have no suspicion of
 you,
 And even insists, to spite the scandal-
 mongers,
 That we shall be together constantly;
 So that is how, without the risk of
 blame,
 I can be here locked up with you alone,
 And can reveal to you my heart, per-
 haps
 Only too ready to allow your passion.
 TAR. Your words are somewhat
 hard to understand,
 Madam; just now you used a different
 style.
 ELM. If that refusal has offended
 you,
 How little do you know a woman's
 heart!
 How ill you guess what it would have
 you know,
 When it presents so feeble a defense;
 Always, at first, our modesty resists
 The tender feelings you inspire us
 with.
 Whatever cause we find to justify
 The love that masters us, we still must
 feel
 Some little shame in owning it; and
 strive
 To make as though we would not, when
 we would.
 But from the very way we go about it,
 We let a lover know our heart sur-
 renders,
 The while our lips, for honor's sake,
 oppose
 Our heart's desire, and in refusing
 promise.
 I'm telling you my secret all too freely
 And with too little heed to modesty.
 But—now that I've made bold to speak
 —pray, tell me,
 Should I have tried to keep Damis from
 speaking,
 Should I have heard the offer of your
 heart
 So quietly, and suffered all your plead-
 ing,
 And taken it just as I did—remember—
 If such a declaration had not pleased
 me,
 And, when I tried my utmost to per-
 suade you

Not to accept the marriage that was
 talked of,
 What should my earnestness have
 hinted to you
 If not the interest that you've inspired,
 And my chagrin, should such a match
 compel me
 To share a heart I want all to myself?
 TAR. 'Tis, past a doubt, the height
 of happiness,
 To hear such words from lips we dote
 upon;
 Their honeyed sweetness pours through
 all my senses
 Long draughts of suavity ineffable.
 My heart employs its utmost zeal to
 please you,
 And counts your love its one beati-
 tude;
 And yet that heart must beg that you
 allow it
 To doubt a little its felicity.
 I well might think these words an
 honest trick
 To make me break off this approaching
 marriage;
 And if I may express myself quite
 plainly,
 I cannot trust these too enchanting
 words
 Until the granting of some little favor
 I sigh for, shall assure me of their truth
 And build within my soul, on firm
 foundations,
 A lasting faith in your sweet charity.
 ELM. [*coughing to draw her hus-
 band's attention.*] What! Must
 you go so fast?—and all at once
 Exhaust the whole love of a woman's
 heart?
 She does herself the violence to make
 This dear confession of her love, and
 you
 Are not yet satisfied, and will not be
 Without the granting of her utmost
 favors?
 TAR. The less a blessing is deserved,
 the less
 We dare to hope for it; and words alone
 Can ill assuage our love's desires. A
 fate
 Too full of happiness, seems doubtful
 still;
 We must enjoy it ere we can believe it.

And I, who know how little I deserve
Your goodness, doubt the fortunes of
my daring;

So I shall trust to nothing, madam, till
You have convinced my love by some-
thing real.

ELM. Ah! How your love enacts the
tyrant's rôle,
And throws my mind into a strange
confusion!

With what fierce sway it rules a con-
quered heart,
And violently will have its wishes
granted!

What! Is there no escape from your
pursuit?

No respite even?—not a breathing
space?

Nay, is it decent to be so exacting,
And so abuse by urgency the weakness
You may discover in a woman's heart?

TAR. But if my worship wins your
gracious favor,
Then why refuse me some sure proof
thereof?

ELM. But how can I consent to
what you wish,
Without offending Heaven you talk so
much of?

TAR. If Heaven is all that stands
now in my way,
I'll easily remove that little hindrance;
Your heart need not hold back for such
a trifle.

ELM. But they affright us so with
Heaven's commands!

TAR. I can dispel these foolish fears,
dear madam;
I know the art of pacifying scruples.
Heaven forbids, 'tis true, some satis-
factions;

But we find means to make things
right with Heaven.

There is a science, madam, that in-
structs us

How to enlarge the limits of our con-
science

According to our various occasions,

And rectify the evil of the deed

According to our purity of motive.

I'll duly teach you all these secrets,
madam;

You only need to let yourself be guided.

Content my wishes, have no fear at all;

I answer for 't, and take the sin upon
me.

[ELMIRE coughs still louder.]

Your cough is very bad.

ELM. Yes, I'm in torture.

TAR. Would you accept this bit of
licorice?

ELM. The case is obstinate, I find;
and all

The licorice in the world will do no
good.

TAR. 'Tis very trying.

ELM. More than words can say.

TAR. In any case, your scruple's
easily

Removed. With me you're sure of
secrecy,

And there's no harm unless a thing is
known.

The public scandal is what brings
offense,

And secret sinning is not sin at all.

ELM. [after coughing again.] So
then, I see I must resolve to
yield;

I must consent to grant you every-
thing,

And cannot hope to give full satisfac-
tion,

Or win full confidence, at lesser cost.
No doubt 'tis very hard to come to
this;

'Tis quite against my will I go so far;
But since I must be forced to it, since
nothing

That can be said suffices for belief,
Since more convincing proof is still de-
manded,

I must make up my mind to humor
people.

If my consent give reason for offense,
So much the worse for him who forced
me to it;

The fault can surely not be counted
mine.

TAR. It need not, madam; and the
thing itself . . .

ELM. Open the door, I pray you,
and just see

Whether my husband's not there, in
the hall.

TAR. Why take such care for him?

Between ourselves,
He is a man to lead round by the nose.

He's capable of glorying in our meetings;

I've fooled him so, he'd see all, and deny it.

ELM. No matter; go, I beg you, look about,
And carefully examine every corner.

[Exit TARTUFFE.]

ORG. [*crawling out from the table.*]

That is, I own, a man . . .
abominable!

I can't get over it; the whole thing floors me.

ELM. What? You come out so soon? You cannot mean it!
Go back under the table; 'tis not time yet;

Wait till the end, to see, and make quite certain,
And don't believe a thing on mere conjecture.

ORG. Nothing more wicked e'er came out of hell.

ELM. Dear me! Don't go and credit things too lightly.
No, let yourself be thoroughly convinced;

Don't yield too soon, for fear you'll be mistaken.

[As TARTUFFE enters, she makes her husband stand behind her.]

TAR. [*not seeing ORGON.*] All things conspire toward my satisfaction,
Madam, I've searched the whole apartment through.

There's no one here; and now my ravished soul . . .

ORG. [*stopping him.*] Softly! You are too eager in your amours;
You needn't be so passionate. Ah, ha! My holy man! You want to put it on me!

How is your soul abandoned to temptation!

Marry my daughter, eh?—and want my wife, too?

I doubted long enough if this was earnest,

Expecting all the time the tone would change;

But now the proof's been carried far enough;

I'm satisfied, and ask no more, for my part.

ELM. [*to TARTUFFE.*] 'Twas quite against my character to play
This part; but I was forced to treat you so.

TAR. What? You believe . . . ?

ORG. Come, now, no protestations.
Get out from here, and make no fuss about it.

TAR. But my intent . . .

ORG. That talk is out of season.
You leave my house this instant.

TAR. You're the one
To leave it, you who play the master here!

This house belongs to me, I'll have you know,
And show you plainly it's no use to turn

To these low tricks, to pick a quarrel with me,

And that you can't insult me at your pleasure,

For I have wherewith to confound your lies,

Avenge offended Heaven, and compel
Those to repent who talk to me of leaving. . . . [*Exit TARTUFFE.*]

ELM. What sort of speech is this?
What can it mean?

ORG. My faith, I'm dazed. This is no laughing matter.

ELM. What?

ORG. From his words I see my great mistake;
The deed of gift is one thing troubles me.

ELM. The deed of gift . . .

ORG. Yes, that is past recall.
But I've another thing to make me anxious.

ELM. What's that?

ORG. You shall know all. Let's see at once

Whether a certain box is still upstairs.
[*Exeunt.*]

ACT V

[*Enter ORGON and CLÉANTE.*]

CLÉ. Whither away so fast?

ORG. How should I know?

CLÉ. Methinks we should begin by taking counsel

To see what can be done to meet the case.

ORG. I'm all worked up about that wretched box.

More than all else it drives me to despair.

CLÉ. That box must hide some mighty mystery?

ORG. Argas, my friend who is in trouble, brought it

Himself, most secretly, and left it with me.

He chose me, in his exile, for this trust; And on these documents, from what he said,

I judge his life and property depend.

CLÉ. How could you trust them to another's hands?

ORG. By reason of a conscientious scruple.

I went straight to my traitor, to confide in him; his sophistry made me believe That I must give the box to him to keep,

So that, in case of search, I might deny My having it at all, and still, by favor Of this evasion, keep my conscience clear

Even in taking oath against the truth.

CLÉ. Your case is bad, so far as I can see;

This deed of gift, this trusting of the secret

To him, were both—to state my frank opinion—

Steps that you took too lightly; he can lead you

To any length, with these for hostages; And since he holds you at such disadvantage,

You'd be still more imprudent to provoke him;

So you must go some gentler way about.

ORG. What! Can a soul so base, a heart so false,

Hide 'neath the semblance of such touching fervor?

I took him in, a vagabond, a beggar! . . .

'Tis too much! No more pious folk for me!

I shall abhor them utterly forever, And henceforth treat them worse than any devil.

CLÉ. So! There you go again, quite off the handle!

In nothing do you keep an even temper. You never know what reason is, but always

Jump first to one extreme, and then the other.

You see your error, and you recognize That you've been cozened by a feigned zeal;

But to make up for 't, in the name of reason,

Why should you plunge into a worse mistake,

And find no difference in character Between a worthless scamp, and all good people?

What! Just because a rascal boldly duped you

With pompous show of false austerity, Must you needs have it everybody's like him,

And no one's truly pious nowadays?

Leave such conclusions to mere infidels;

Distinguish virtue from its counterfeit,

Don't give esteem too quickly, at a venture,

But try to keep, in this, the golden mean.

If you can help it, don't uphold imposture;

But do not rail at true devoutness, either;

And if you must fall into one extreme, Then rather err again the other way.

[Enter DAMIS.]

DAM. What! father, can the scoundrel threaten you,

Forget the many benefits received,

And in his base abominable pride

Make of your very favors arms against you?

ORG. Too true, my son. It tortures me to think on 't.

DAM. Let me alone, I'll chop his ears off for him.

We must deal roundly with his insolence;

'Tis I must free you from him at a blow;

'Tis I, to set things right, must strike him down.

CLÉ. Spoke like a true young man.

Now, just calm down,
And moderate your towering tantrums,
will you?
We live in such an age, with such a
king,
That violence cannot advance our
cause.

[Enter MADAME PERNELLE, EL-
MIRE, MARIANE, and DORINE.]

MME. PER. What's this? I hear of
fearful mysteries!

ORG. Strange things, indeed, for my
own eyes to witness;

You see how I'm requited for my kind-
ness.

I zealously receive a wretched beggar,
I lodge him, entertain him like my
brother,

Load him with benefactions every day,
Give him my daughter, give him all my
fortune:

And he meanwhile, the villain, rascal,
wretch,

Tries with black treason to suborn my
wife,

And not content with such a foul design,
He dares to menace me with my own
favors,

And would make use of those advan-
tages

Which my too foolish kindness armed
him with,

To ruin me, to take my fortune from
me,

And leave me in the state I saved him
from.

DOR. Poor man!

MME. PER. My son, I cannot pos-
sibly

Believe he could intend so black a deed.
ORG. What?

MME. PER. Worthy men are still the
sport of envy.

ORG. Mother, what do you mean by
such a speech?

MME. PER. There are strange go-
ings-on about your house,
And everybody knows your people hate
him.

ORG. What's that to do with what I
tell you now?

MME. PER. I always said, my son,
when you were little:

That virtue here below is hated ever;
The envious may die, but envy never.

ORG. What's that fine speech to do
with present facts?

MME. PER. Be sure, they've forged
a hundred silly lies . . .

ORG. I've told you once, I saw it all
myself.

MME. PER. For slanderers abound
in calumnies . . .

ORG. Mother, you'd make me damn
my soul. I tell you

I saw with my own eyes his shame-
lessness.

MME. PER. Their tongues for spit-
ting venom never lack,
There's nothing here below they'll not
attack.

ORG. Your speech has not a single
grain of sense.

I saw it, harkee, saw it, with these
eyes

I saw—d' ye know what *saw* means?—
must I say it

A hundred times, and din it in your
ears?

MME. PER. My dear, appearances
are oft deceiving,
And seeing shouldn't always be believ-
ing.

ORG. I'll go mad.

MME. PER. False suspicions may
delude,

And good to evil oft is misconstrued.

ORG. Must I construe as Christian
charity

The wish to kiss my wife!

MME. PER. You must, at least,
Have just foundation for accusing
people,

And wait until you see a thing for sure.

ORG. The devil! How could I see
any surer?

Should I have waited till, before my
eyes,

He . . . No, you'll make me say things
quite improper.

MME. PER. In short, 'tis known too
pure a zeal inflames him;

And so, I cannot possibly conceive
That he should try to do what's charged
against him.

ORG. If you were not my mother, I
should say

Such things! . . . I know not what,
I'm so enraged!

DOR. [to ORGON.] Fortune has paid
you fair, to be so doubted;
You flouted our report, now yours is
flouted.

CLÉ. We're wasting time here in the
merest trifling,
Which we should rather use in taking
measures

To guard ourselves against the scound-
rel's threats.

DAM. You think his impudence
could go so far?

ELM. For one, I can't believe it pos-
sible;
Why, his ingratitude would be too
patent.

CLÉ. Don't trust to that; he'll find
abundant warrant
To give good color to his acts against
you;

And for less cause than this, a strong
cabal

Can make one's life a labyrinth of
troubles.

I tell you once again: armed as he is
You never should have pushed him
quite so far.

ORG. True; yet what could I do?
The rascal's pride
Made me lose all control of my re-
signment.

CLÉ. I wish with all my heart that
some pretense
Of peace could be patched up between
you two.

ELM. If I had known what weapons
he was armed with,
I never should have raised such an
alarm,

And my . . .

ORG. [to DORINE, seeing MR. LOYAL
come in.] Who's coming now?
Go quick, find out.

I'm in a fine state to receive a visit!

MR. L. [to DORINE, at the back of
the stage.] Good-day, good sis-
ter. Pray you, let me see

The master of the house.

DOR. He's occupied;
I think he can see nobody at present.

MR. L. I'm not by way of being
unwelcome here.

My coming can, I think, nowise dis-
please him;

My errand will be found to his ad-
vantage.

DOR. Your name, then?

MR. L. Tell him simply that his
friend

Mr. Tartuffe has sent me, for his
goods . . .

DOR. [to ORGON.] It is a man who
comes, with civil manners,
Sent by Tartuffe, he says, upon an
errand

That you'll be pleased with.

CLÉ. [to ORGON.] Surely you must
see him,
And find out who he is, and what he
wants.

ORG. [to CLÉANTE.] Perhaps he's
come to make it up between us;
How shall I treat him?

CLÉ. You must not get angry;
And if he talks of reconciliation,
Accept it.

MR. L. [to ORGON.] Sir, good-day.
And Heaven send

Harm to your enemies, favor to you.

ORG. [aside to CLÉANTE.] This mild
beginning suits with my con-
jectures

And promises some compromise
already.

MR. L. All of your house has long
been dear to me;

I had the honor, sir, to serve your
father

ORG. Sir, I am much ashamed, and
ask your pardon

For not recalling now your face or
name.

MR. L. My name is Loyal. I'm
from Normandy.

My office is court-bailiff, in despite
Of envy; and for forty years, thank
Heaven

It's been my fortune to perform that
office

With honor. So I've come, sir, by your
leave,

To render service of a certain writ . . .

ORG. What, you are here to . . .

MR. L. Pray, sir, don't be angry.
'Tis nothing, sir, but just a little sum-
mons:—

Order to vacate, you and yours, this house,
Move out your furniture, make room for others,
And that without delay or putting off,
As needs must be . . .

ORG. I? Leave this house?

MR. L. Yes, please, sir.
The house is now, as you well know, of course,

Mr. Tartuffe's. And he, beyond dispute,
Of all your goods is henceforth lord and master

By virtue of a contract here attached,
Drawn in due form, and unassailable.

DAM. [to MR. LOYAL.] Your insolence is monstrous, and astounding!

MR. L. [to DAMIS.] I have no business, sir, that touches you;
[Pointing to ORGON.] This is the gentleman. He's fair and courteous,

And knows too well a gentleman's behavior

To wish in any wise to question justice.

ORG. But . . .

MR. L. Sir, I know you would not for a million

Wish to rebel; like a good citizen
You'll let me put in force the court's decree.

DAM. Your long black gown may well, before you know it,
Mister Court-bailiff, get a thorough beating.

MR. L. [to ORGON.] Sir, make your son be silent or withdraw.

I should be loath to have to set things down,

And see your names inscribed in my report.

DOR. [aside.] This Mr. Loyal's looks are most disloyal.

MR. L. I have much feeling for respectable

And honest folk like you, sir, and contented

To serve these papers, only to oblige you,

And thus prevent the choice of any other

Who, less possessed of zeal for you than I am,
Might order matters in less gentle fashion.

ORG. And how could one do worse than order people
Out of their house?

MR. L. Why, we allow you time;
And even will suspend until to-morrow
The execution of the order, sir.
I'll merely, without scandal, quietly,
Come here and spend the night, with half a score

Of officers; and just for form's sake, please

You'll bring your keys to me, before retiring.

I will take care not to disturb your rest,
And see there's no unseemly conduct here.

But by to-morrow, and at early morning,

You must make haste to move your least belongings;

My men will help you—I have chosen strong ones

To serve you, sir, in clearing out the house.

No one could act more generously, I fancy,

And, since I'm treating you with great indulgence,

I beg you'll do as well by me, and see

I'm not disturbed in my discharge of duty.

ORG. I'd give this very minute, and not grudge it,

The hundred best gold louis I have left,
If I could just indulge myself, and land
My fist, for one good square one, on his snout.

CLÉ. [aside to ORGON.] Careful!—don't make things worse.

DAM. Such insolence!
I hardly can restrain myself. My hands

Are itching to be at him.

DOR. By my faith,
With such a fine broad back, good Mr. Loyal,

A little beating would become you well.

MR. L. My girl, such infamous words are actionable,

And warrants can be issued against women.

CLÉ. [to MR. LOYAL.] Enough of this discussion, sir; have done.

Give us the paper, and then leave us, pray.

MR. L. Then *au revoir*. Heaven keep you from disaster! [Exit.]

ORG. May Heaven confound you both, you and your master!

—Well, mother, am I right or am I not?

This writ may help you now to judge the matter.

Or don't you see his treason even yet?

MME. PER. I'm all amazed, befuddled, and befuddled!

DOR. [to ORGON.] You are quite wrong, you have no right to blame him;

This action only proves his good intentions.

Love for his neighbor makes his virtue perfect;

And knowing money is a root of evil, In Christian charity, he'd take away Whatever things may hinder your salvation.

ORG. Be still. You always need to have that told you.

CLÉ. [to ORGON.] Come, let us see what course you are to follow.

ELM. Go and expose his bold ingratitude.

Such action must invalidate the contract;

His perfidy must now appear too black To bring him the success that he expects.

[Enter VALÈRE.]

VAL. 'Tis with regret, sir, that I bring bad news;

But urgent danger forces me to do so. A close and intimate friend of mine, who knows

The interest I take in what concerns you,

Has gone so far, for my sake, as to break

The secrecy that's due to state affairs, And sent me word but now, that leaves you only

The one expedient of sudden flight.

The villain who so long imposed upon you,

Found means, an hour ago, to see the prince,

And to accuse you (among other things)

By putting in his hands the private strong-box

Of a state criminal, whose guilty secret, You failing in your duty as a subject

(He says) have kept. I know no more of it

Save that a warrant's drawn against you, sir,

And for the greater surety, that same rascal

Comes with the officer who must arrest you.

CLÉ. His rights are armed; and this is how the scoundrel

Seeks to secure the property he claims.

ORG. Man is a wicked animal, I'll own it!

VAL. The least delay may still be fatal, sir.

I have my carriage, and a thousand louis,

Provided for your journey, at the door. Let's lose no time; the bolt is swift to

strike,

And such as only flight can save you from.

I'll be your guide to seek a place of safety,

And stay with you until you reach it, sir.

ORG. How much I owe to your obliging care!

Another time must serve to thank you fitly;

And I pray Heaven to grant me so much favor

That I may some day recompense your service.

Good-bye; see to it, all of you . . .

CLÉ. Come, hurry; We'll see to everything that's needful, brother.

[Enter TARTUFFE and an OFFICER.]

TAR. [stopping ORGON.] Softly, sir, softly; do not run so fast;

You haven't far to go to find your lodging;

By order of the prince, we here arrest you.

ORG. Traitor! You saved this worst stroke for the last;
This crowns your perfidies, and ruins me.

TAR. I shall not be embittered by your insults,
For Heaven has taught me to endure all things.

CLÉ. Your moderation, I must own, is great.

DAM. How shamelessly the wretch makes bold with Heaven!

TAR. Your ravings cannot move me; all my thought

Is but to do my duty.

MAR. You must claim

Great glory from this honorable act.

TAR. The act cannot be aught but honorable,

Coming from that high power which sends me here.

ORG. Ungrateful wretch, do you forget 'twas I

That rescued you from utter misery?

TAR. I've not forgot some help you may have given;

But my first duty now is toward my prince.

The higher power of that most sacred claim

Must stifle in my heart all gratitude;
And to such puissant ties I'd sacrifice
My friend, my wife, my kindred, and myself.

ELM. The hypocrite!

DOR. How well he knows the trick
Of cloaking him with what we most revere!

CLÉ. But if the motive that you make parade of

Is perfect as you say, why should it wait

To show itself, until the day he caught you

Soliciting his wife? How happens it
You have not thought to go inform against him

Until his honor forces him to drive you
Out of his house? And though I need not mention

That he's just given you his whole estate,

Still, if you meant to treat him now as guilty,

How could you then consent to take his gift?

TAR. [*to the OFFICER.*] Pray, sir, deliver me from all this clamor;

Be good enough to carry out your order.

THE OFF. Yes, I've too long delayed its execution;

'Tis very fitting you should urge me to it;

So, therefore, you must follow me at once

To prison, where you'll find your lodging ready.

TAR. Who? I, sir?

THE OFF. You.

TAR. But why to prison?

THE OFF. You

Are not the one to whom I owe account.

You, sir, [*to ORGON*] recover from your hot alarm.

Our prince is not a friend to double-dealing,

His eyes can read men's inmost hearts, and all

The art of hypocrites cannot deceive him.

His sharp discernment sees things clear and true;

His mind cannot too easily be swayed,
For reason always holds the balance even.

He honors and exalts true piety,
But knows the false, and views it with disgust.

This fellow was by no means apt to fool him,

Far subtler snares have failed against his wisdom,

And his quick insight pierced immediately

The hidden baseness of this tortuous heart.

Accusing you, the knave betrayed himself,

And by true recompense of Heaven's justice

He stood revealed before our monarch's eyes

A scoundrel known before by other names,

Whose horrid crimes, detailed at length,
 might fill
 A long-drawn history of many volumes.
 Our monarch—to resolve you in a
 word—
 Detesting his ingratitude and baseness,
 Added this horror to his other crimes,
 And sent me hither under his direction
 To see his insolence out-top itself,
 And force him then to give you satisfaction.
 Your papers, which the traitor says
 are his,
 I am to take from him, and give you
 back;
 The deed of gift transferring your
 estate
 Our monarch's sovereign will makes
 null and void;
 And for the secret personal offense
 Your friend involved you in, he pardons you:
 Thus he rewards your recent zeal, displayed
 In helping to maintain his rights, and
 shows
 How well his heart, when it is least expected,
 Knows how to recompense a noble
 deed,
 And will not let true merit miss its
 due,
 Remembering always rather good than
 evil.

DOR. Now, Heaven be praised!

MME. PER. At last I breathe again.

ELM. A happy outcome!

MAR. Who'd have dared to hope it?

ORG. [*to TARTUFFE, who is being led off by the OFFICER.*] There, traitor! Now, you're . . .

[*Exeunt TARTUFFE and OFFICER.*]

CLÉ. Brother, hold!—and don't

Descend to such indignities, I beg you.
 Leave the poor wretch to his unhappy
 fate,

And let remorse oppress him, but not
 you.

Hope rather that his heart may now
 return

To virtue, hate his vice, reform his
 ways,

And win the pardon of our glorious
 prince;

While you must straightway go, and
 on your knees

Repay with thanks his noble generous
 kindness.

ORG. Well said! We'll go, and at
 his feet kneel down,

With joy to thank him for his good-
 ness shown;

And this first duty done, with honors
 due,

We'll then attend upon another, too,
 With wedded happiness reward Valère,
 And crown a lover noble and sincere.

[*Exeunt omnes.*]

CHAPTER VI

THE DRAMA OF THE RESTORATION

The Restoration saw a change in English drama which paralleled the change in English life. Superficially many differences were visible; but basically the old characteristics continued. The French drama has been discussed in the preceding chapter. Its influence on Restoration drama should not be overlooked, but, on the other hand, one should remember that there was no uprooting of Elizabethan and Jacobean drama. The plays of the age of Shakespeare and Jonson owed something to the classics. Moreover, their medieval antecedents were collateral with those of the French plays. In the bear-gardens, the masques, the classical plays of Jonson, the romances of Beaumont and Fletcher, and the songs here and there in various plays, the older English drama furnishes suggestions of nearly every important phase of the Restoration theatrical output. The changes in drama were, in part, then, of French origin, but were in even larger part a development of tendencies already existing when the Puritan edict closed the doors of the theaters in 1642.

There are several reasons why the Restoration of the Stuart monarchy tended to produce a change in English drama. The drama had been close to the heart of the Londoner and had been a constant source of irritation between the two political factions of the first four decades of the seventeenth century. The peremptory closing of the theaters by one faction (1642) was almost a cue for their reopening by the other when it regained power. It is reasonably certain that Prince Charles had attended the numerous dramatic performances (some twenty-five a year) commanded to the court by his father, Charles I. Moreover, Charles II had spent his exile in France. Many noblemen and other royalists were with him. As monarchists they were received at the court of Louis XIV—and the preceding chapter has shown the intimate relation between the French court and the French stage. Charles and his followers, accustomed as they were to witnessing the performance of plays, were interested in, and influenced by, the French theater which in its stage and its use of scenery was more advanced than the theater of England. It is not surprising then to find that Charles was favorable to reviving the drama in England and that the newly authorized theaters saw many French innovations, or, perhaps more accurately, the sudden borrowing from France of devices and methods which merely existed in embryo form in the Elizabethan theater and might have developed—more slowly, of course—even without the powerful stimulus of French influence.

Between the accession of James I and the accession of his grandson, Charles II, there were many changes in the buildings in which plays were offered. In the absence of any reliable figures it would seem that the average Elizabethan theater accommodated about one thousand people. The typical Restoration structure was considerably larger—doubtless partly because of the great vogue of spectacle.¹ The size may have been influenced also by the known protection which the monopolies would afford against possible rivalry. Whereas the typical

¹ If a reference to conditions today may be pardoned, 5,000 people may receive something like the full offering of the New York Hippodrome while 299 receive the comedies of Winthrop Ames's Little Theater.

Elizabethan theater fronted its stage with a U-shaped row of covered balconies enclosing a ground-space open to the sky, the Restoration theater was a closed building much more like the theater of today. In decoration and equipment, new theaters were increasingly luxurious—though some of the Elizabethan ones were not by any means destitute of sumptuous furnishings.

The stage here made one of its major changes. The proscenium shrank considerably; a major part of the stage was now cut off from view by the falling of the newly arranged drop-curtain. The stage was no longer virtually surrounded by the audience as it had been in the Elizabethan theater. Boxes directly overlooked the proscenium portion, but otherwise the audience occupied the same position it occupies today.

Whereas the Elizabethan "groundlings" stood, all Restoration spectators commonly sat upon benches. Except for the hiring of boxes, however, the boon of reserved seats was not to come for several generations yet. Tickets merely admitted the holders to a certain part of the theater. To be sure of a seat, one had to arrive early. Well-to-do families often sent their servants several hours ahead to secure possession of seats. This state of affairs—a source, naturally, of some disorder—continued surprisingly late—well into the nineteenth century.

Another innovation was the use of painted scenery. There had been scenery before 1600. A theatrical transaction of 1598 notes the sale of—among other properties—a "cloth with a sone and mone" painted on it. Instances might be multiplied. Elizabethan scenery was negligible, however, in comparison with the well-defined scenery of the Restoration age. This scenery was similar to that which is still found in the equipment of some provincial theaters and traveling companies. It consisted of a painted back-curtain with painted "wings" in sets. From the front, a fair impression of reality was assured. From the side, the spectator could see behind the opposite wings. Such furniture as was necessary was of course used on the stage. The scenery could be changed quickly by raising and lowering back-curtains and by pushing the corresponding wing-pieces in or out.

Another change was seen in the entrance of women into the profession of acting. This would seem to be a real innovation. In a few instances women may have previously appeared on the English stage. There are one or two unauthenticated references to the acting of British women—a wife substituting for a sick actor-husband, or the like. French women, members of a troupe, traveling in England, were hooted and jeered. With the "refinement" of the Restoration stage, however, women rapidly replaced boys in the women's parts—though boys did not disappear at once. The question of actresses was settled by Charles II, who specifically authorized them in his grant of theatrical patents. Tradition has it that the first part played by a woman was that of Desdemona in a late 1660 presentation of Shakespeare's *Othello*; but the priority of this performance is very questionable. An actress is known to have appeared in recitative in *The Siege of Rhodes* in 1656, and speaking parts may well have been cast with actresses before the traditional first performance.

The "merry monarch's" interest in the theater resulted in at least one evil—the theatrical monopolies. In Elizabethan days there were at least a dozen theaters whose names have survived, and many of them were playing simultaneously. By granting monopolies, Charles II struck a most deadly blow against the theater. He virtually cut off dramatic initiative. The first patent—for the erection of the Theatre Royal in Drury Lane—was granted to Thomas Killigrew (1612-1683). Charles probably thought a second company would make for healthy rivalry, and he granted a patent for a theater in Lincoln's Inn Fields. The patentee was Sir William Davenant, a man who had been interested in drama in the old days, had been in exile in France, and in 1656 had

given in a private house a drama, *The Siege of Rhodes*, destined to be very influential. Every legitimate actor or playwright was now to be definitely attached to, or associated with, one of the two patent houses. The company which played at the Theatre Royal in Drury Lane was known as the King's Men; the one which played at the theater in Lincoln's Inn Fields was known as the Duke of York's Men.

As would be expected, the theaters were closely identified with the royal circle. Charles did not usually attend the playhouses, but frequently commanded performances at court. He lavished attention and honors upon a favorite actress, Nell Gwyn, and set the style for a number of noblemen and for other notables such as Dryden and Pepys. Noblemen were in some cases stockholders and were very free and easy in their movements about the theater. At one time any person connected with the court could attend one act of a play without paying. For gentlemen of fashion, the stage was "the thing." The list of Restoration playwrights contains such officially eminent names as those of the Earl of Orrery and the second Duke of Buckingham. The preoccupation of the court and of metropolitan society with the theater had, of course, a profound effect on the nature of the plays.

The more important types of Restoration drama were five in number—spectacle, opera, heroic-play, tragedy, and comedy of intrigue and manners. All of these owed something to foreign precept and example and all had at least a partial origin in Elizabethan and earlier drama.

The spectacle demands attention first, in order that it may be dismissed. It was the Restoration manifestation of the everlasting taste for extravaganza, the taste which made Roman audiences prefer tumbling to the Terentian comedy offered on the same bill. In earlier days in England the analogue of the spectacle had been given not on the professional stage but by the court or a nobleman, or some other institution or individual. Henry VIII had spent enormous sums on court revels. Not so the frugal Elizabeth, but James I and Charles I revived the custom. Ben Jonson wrote many masques, and Inigo Jones often designed the scenery. Milton's now famous *Comus* was prepared as the book for an elaborate "Maske presented at Ludlow Castle, 1634, on Michaelmasse Night before the Right Honourable John, Earle of Bridgewater, Lord President of Wales." In addition to the masque proper, which did not belong to the professional stage, the Elizabethan stage had also its processions and ensembles which doubtless made their appeal along with the plot and the poetry of the plays.

After the Restoration, the fondness for spectacle (one might almost say an assumed fondness, since the theater entered upon less prosperous days) was catered to by the exhibition of jugglers, tumblers, sorcerers, dancers, and animals—an offering known to many ages and nations and doubtless very much like a modern vaudeville show. Effort seems to have been made to have each production more extravagant than the preceding—just as a similar inspiration guides many of the big revue managers today. The development of spectacle as an accessory to the regular plays occurred also. An advertisement of a performance of *Macbeth* featured the mechanical devices used in presenting the witches. Spectacle was used as an adjunct notably in the case of the heroic play. The spectacle relied on dialogue slightly if at all—and cannot be said to belong to the drama proper. It will be referred to further only in connection with the development of the legitimate drama.

The Restoration opera stood half-way between the spectacle proper and the drama proper. Scenery and spectacle of course were combined with book

and lyrics. The type was not entirely new, for operatic elements had been present in the form of incidental songs and music in many Elizabethan plays. The masque, moreover, was operatic in its nature. *The Siege of Rhodes*, Davenant's important pre-Restoration work, belongs not more to the history of the heroic play than to the history of the opera. The book was chanted in recitative, however, whereas the opera of the Restoration normally had its dialogue spoken. The term opera was elastic. In Restoration usage almost any play with interspersed songs and incidental music was referred to as an opera. Foreign singers were paid large sums to sing in these productions, but the vogue of Italian opera proper came after the turn of the century. French opera companies, however, performed several times in London during the period. The English dramatic operas in the years 1660-1700 were often adaptations of older plays such as *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Macbeth*, *The Tempest*, and *Philaster*. Chief among those important in the composition of operas were Henry Purcell, the musician, and the versatile John Dryden, who tried his hand successfully at almost every type of writing which had vogue in his day. The two collaborated on the long successful *King Arthur, or, The British Worthy* (1692), which, though rivaled by the Dryden-Grabut *Albion and Albanus* (1685), was perhaps the best opera of the Restoration period.

One of two typical dramatic products of the Restoration age was the heroic play. This type of drama outdid opera in catering to a fondness for the bizarre. It placed its scenes far away in place and in time. Typical subjects—to borrow the titles of the first example and the culminating example—were *The Siege of Rhodes*, and *The Conquest of Granada*. The heroic play characteristically presented a blameless hero, triumphant in love and war, and an equally noble heroine. Complication was furnished by other ladies loving the hero and other men loving the heroine. There were often several concurrent plots and the action is—in consequence—sometimes difficult to follow. The form, though it has parallels in the work of certain of the later Elizabethans—notably Beaumont and Fletcher—was imitated from the French. Models were found in the tragedies of Corneille as well as in the heroic plays of less well-known French writers. French romances were a mine for the plots. The meter was the heroic couplet, a form which had been used here and there in the work of the Elizabethans but was especially commended to the Restoration worthies by its similarity to the riming Alexandrines of the French plays. This type of play abounded in spectacle, lofty declamation, and metaphor.

First among English heroic plays—and already referred to as first among English operas—was *The Siege of Rhodes* by Sir William Davenant. Davenant had been court poet under Charles I, and had secured permission to construct a theater before the edict of 1642. After various vicissitudes (including imprisonment) in the service of his sovereign, he turned his attention again to the drama and gave as a feeler a program entitled *First Day's Entertainment at Rutland House* in 1656. The offering consisted of music and a dialogue on the question whether there should be plays in England. Not being molested, Davenant later in the same year presented *The Siege of Rhodes*, a work much nearer to drama, though the spoken word was avoided. This pioneer play has—unlike many of its type—a very simple plot. Alphonso, the Christian hero, is besieged in Rhodes. Solymán, his noble pagan rival, detains Alphonso's wife, Ianthe, who is trying to reach her husband. Alphonso is jealous—but the play ends in a general reconciliation. The love-and-war plot is typical of the heroic play, but *The Siege of Rhodes* has no intrinsic interest for the modern reader. Its importance lies in its being certainly or conjecturally "first" in so many ways. It has more or less valid claims to being the first heroic play and the first English opera—

as well as the first play to make use of an actress and to employ scenery in something like the modern sense of the term.

In regard to scenery, the play was particularly epoch-making:

The Scene before the
First Entry.

The curtain being drawn up, a lightsome sky appear'd, discover'ing a maritime coast, full of craggy rocks, and high cliffs, with several verdures naturally growing upon such situations; and afar off, the true prospect of the City of Rhodes, when it was in prosperous estate; with so much view of the gardens and hills about it as the narrowness of the room could allow the scene. In that part of the horizon, terminated by the sea, was represented the *Turkish* fleet, making towards a promontory, some few miles distant from the town.

This description marks *The Siege of Rhodes* as scenically different from preceding plays and akin to those following, even to the present day.

Generally cited as the most typical heroic play is Dryden's *Almanzor and Almahide, or The Conquest of Granada by the Spaniards*, a work in two parts (ten acts) which were presented at the Theatre Royal in Drury Lane, in December, 1670, and January, 1671. The locale is typical—a distant country with a background of war. Color is furnished by a bull-fight, dances, singing, and ghosts. The hero, Almanzor, is, in the words of Dryden's "Dedication," "not absolutely perfect, but of an excessive and over-boiling courage." In the Granadan civil war and in the conflict between Christians and Moors fortune instantly favors the side supported by the mighty fighter, lover, and declaimer, Almanzor. In the end all is well, for not only is Boabdilin, King of Granada, killed that his bride in duress, Almahide, may marry her faithful Almanzor; but Almanzor himself is found by a birthmark to be a son of the Christian general and a relative of the Spanish king. Dryden stated that he was imitating and improving on Davenant's *The Siege of Rhodes*. The plots are basically very similar, but Dryden's is much more complicated.

To any one who has read several of the heroic plays, the justness of the satire in *The Rehearsal* (1671) will be evident. In this burlesque, the Duke of Buckingham and his collaborators satirize in the character Bayes two court poets, Davenant (*d.* 1668) and, more particularly, the living and prominent Dryden. Most of the exaggerations and absurdities of the heroic drama are also pilloried. Since it followed *The Conquest of Granada* by only a few months, *The Rehearsal* naturally pointed much of its satire at that work. Drawcansir and Amaryllis are burlesques of Almanzor and Almahide, and even many passages are parodied. For example, Dryden's

He who dares love, and for that love must die,
And knowing this, dares yet love on, am I.

becomes

He that dares drink, and for that drink dares die,
And knowing this, dares yet drink on, am I.

Except for Dryden, no writer of the heroic play can be described as important. Besides *The Conquest of Granada*, three of Dryden's heroic plays are remembered—*The Indian Emperour, or The Conquest of Mexico by the Spaniards* (1665), *Tyrannick Love, or The Royal Martyr* (1669), and *Aureng-Zebe* (1675). Lesser writers of the type included George Cartwright, the Earl of Orrery, Elkanah Settle, and John Crowne. The tragedians, Lee and Otway, also tried their apprentice hands on plays of this prevailing type. *Le Cid*, a masterpiece

of the great French dramatist, Corneille, is perhaps the most notable achievement in the play of the heroic genre.

It is not surprising that the heroic play gave to English literature and to the national theater no great example. Its excesses were foreign alike to sober reason and to a rapidly forming critical criterion. Its plots were far-fetched figuratively as well as literally. The characterizations were at best nothing more than conventionalized exaggerations of the Restoration beau ideal of a hero or a heroine—with no basis in life. The type was not popular long. If the heroic play culminated in *The Conquest of Granada* (1670-1671), it was near its end when Dryden wrote *Aureng-Zebe* five years later.

It was, however, not a very far call from the heroic drama to Restoration tragedy. Let the consciously noble characters have some weakness and the germ of tragedy is present. Thus the hero in the brilliantly written *Aureng-Zebe* shows jealousy and his lady exhibits the fear of death—elements which make the piece almost a tragedy and point to Dryden's abandonment of the heroic play. In general, the change from the fashion of the heroic play to the fashion of tragedy saw a change from the iambic pentameter couplet to blank verse. In the prologue of the transitional *Aureng-Zebe* Dryden announced the change in his metrical form. The author, he says,

Grows weary of his long-loved mistress, Rhyme.
 Passion's too fierce to be in fetters bound,
 And nature flies him like enchanted ground.
 What verse can do, he has performed in this,
 Which he presumes the most correct of his:
 But spite of all his pride, a secret shame
 Invades his breast at Shakespeare's sacred name.

The above lines also noted and presaged a decided revival of Shakespeare's influence. Dryden, the laureate Tate, and others adapted various ones of the plays; revivals continued; and Shakespeare was much discussed in critical works.

Under the canons of criticism which were then winning acceptance, Shakespeare, however, could not be given unqualified praise. The case for Shakespeare was stated by John Dryden in *An Essay of Dramatick Poesie* (1668). After maintaining that the plots of English plays are "woven in English looms," and that rimed drama owes its suggestion to the rimed passages in Shakespeare and others rather than to Corneille, Dryden continues:

I dare boldly affirm these two things of the English drama;—First, that we have many plays of ours as regular as any of theirs, and which, besides, have more variety of plot and characters; and secondly, that in most of the irregular plays of Shakespeare and Fletcher (for Ben Jonson's are for the most part regular), there is a more masculine fancy and greater spirit in the writing than there is in any of the French.

In another part of the same essay Dryden wrote:

To begin with Shakespeare. He was the man who of all modern, and perhaps ancient poets, had the largest and most comprehensive soul. All the images of nature were still present to him, and he drew them not laboriously but luckily: when he describes anything, you more than see it, you feel it too.

Despite this high praise, however, Dryden felt constrained to add that Jonson was a "more correct poet" than Shakespeare.

It is not surprising, then, that Dryden—when he turned definitely to tragedy—should think of coupling his name with that of Shakespeare in the purpose of bringing a Shakespearean tragedy into harmony with the Restoration conception of the classical rules.

All for Love (1678) is a blank verse tragedy modeled—despite Dryden's citation of many sources—largely on Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra*. There are many parallel speeches throughout, and Acts III and V of the Restoration play may be specifically compared with corresponding parts of the older drama. Stressing method—as Corneille did in *Le Cid*—rather than material, Dryden compressed the actions of a decade into a day. As a result of the compression, the number of characters was of course reduced. Events which are shown in action in *Antony and Cleopatra* are merely told of in *All for Love*, and the play tends to become wordy. Nevertheless, the tragic characterizations are brilliant and the poetry is often superb. However *All for Love* may fare in comparison with *Antony and Cleopatra*, its position is unassailed as its author's tragic masterpiece and as one of the not more than two or three great tragedies of its period.

Of Dryden's several other tragedies and near-tragedies, not one now commands attention. *Troilus and Cressida* (1679) perhaps deserves mention as another adaptation from Shakespeare. Its preface, moreover, was the well-known essay, "The Grounds of Criticism in Tragedy." In this essay Dryden expressed his adherence to the classic formula as the other famous Restoration critic, Thomas Rymer (1641-1713), had done previously in a preface (1674) to his English edition of René Rapin's *Réflexions sur la poétique* and in his *The Tragedies of the Last Age Consider'd and Examin'd by the Practice of the Ancients and by the Common Sense of All Ages* (1678).

Tragedy in the Restoration period was essayed by a number of now forgotten playwrights—among them John Crowne, John Banks, and Thomas Southerne. The latter founded two plays on the fictions of the sophisticated and notorious early bluestocking, Mrs. Aphra Behn—herself a versatile writer for the stage.

Apart from Dryden, the important figures in Restoration tragedy were Nathaniel Lee (1653?-1692) and Thomas Otway (1652-1685). Both tried the heroic play before the change in theatrical vogue led them—with Dryden—to the composition of tragedies. The tragic vehicle of both was blank verse. Lee and Otway had much in common not only in their writings but in their lives. Each was the son of a clergyman; each went on the stage and failed as an actor; and each turned to the writing of plays.

Lee has no one best remembered play to which one may point as to Dryden's *All for Love* or Otway's *Venice Preserved*. Perhaps most worthy of mention is *The Rival Queens, or The Death of Alexander the Great* (1677). This play—one of the first Restoration tragedies in blank verse—was immensely popular in its time, but has drawn the fire of later critics from Colley Cibber to William Archer. It shows well its author's chief claim to fame—his vigorous declamatory passages. The rant in general outshadows the poetry, but there are a few deservedly well-known lines. "When Greeks joyn'd Greeks, then was the tug of war" enjoys the dubious fame of misquotation. Other plays by Lee are *Mithridates* (1678), *Cæsar Borgia* (1680), and *The Massacre of Paris* (1690).

Though an author of rimed plays, adaptations from the French, and comedies, Otway is remembered for his last two tragedies. *The Orphan* (1680) and *Venice Preserved or A Plot Discovered* (1682) were written for the celebrated actress, Mrs. Barry. They made her famous and carried their author's name, coupled with that of Shakespeare, at least to the first quarter of the nineteenth century. Both plays deal with gruesome family tragedies. In *The Orphan*, two brothers love the titular character, Monimia, with a disastrous sequel. In *Venice Preserved*, there is a political plot in addition to the tragic family triangle.

Venice Preserved is the more famous of Otway's two remembered tragedies. It is often referred to as superior to *All for Love* and as the outstanding tragedy

of the last half of the seventeenth century. Pierre, the lover of liberty whom Byron names with Othello in the Venice passage in Canto IV of *Childe Harold*, heads a band of conspirators against the Venetian government. He persuades into membership in his band, the impoverished Jaffier, an ill-used son-in-law of a senator. Partly because of an insult offered by a conspirator to Jaffier's wife, Belvidera, partly because of a Hamlet-like indecision of character, Jaffier betrays the plot. In a scene suggesting later sentimental tragedy, Jaffier stabs Pierre to save him the ignominy of execution, and then kills himself. The ghosts of the two appear to Belvidera, who promptly dies. As soon as it is too late, the father repents, with a message to all cruel fathers. Though the scene is Venice, there is an English character, Eliot. In its family and political problems, the play seems much more modern than most Restoration plays. Otway excelled in characterization and in plot. Though *Venice Preserved* has not the literary merit of *All for Love*, it is probably a better stage play.

Sharing, with the heroic play, the distinction of being a peculiar product of the Restoration age, is the *genre* now commonly known as Restoration comedy, a realistic comedy of intrigue and manners. The type was foreshadowed in certain Jacobean plays and owed something to Molière, but it rose in the main as the natural product of the milieu in which it originated—the gay immoral court circle of Charles II. It copied the manners and chronicled the intrigues of metropolitan society, members of which were its most important patrons and often participated in its production. Among numerous writers of the type, pre-eminence is usually assigned to a quintet—Etherege, Wycherley, Congreve, Vanbrugh, Farquhar—each of whom produced work of "high" comedy. To this list should be added at least the names of Shadwell and Dryden. The leading early writers of this comedy were Etherege and Wycherley.

Sir George Etherege (c. 1634-c. 1691) is generally regarded as the pioneer in the Restoration comedy of manners. His first play of the type was *She Would If She Could* (1668). His best-known play is *The Man of Mode or Sir Fopling Flutter* (1676). The title character is brought in for a comic burlesque of current affectations; but has nothing to do with the plot. The central character is Dorimant, a social parasite who is always in trouble with debts which he shirks and with mistresses, past and present, lowly and highborn. The author, however, does not regard Dorimant as a case for poetic justice. He is obviously offered as a character worthy of any man's admiration and any woman's love, and he carries off the heroine in due time. Etherege belonged to the court circle and his plays are known for a polished dialogue which was doubtless imitated from the conversations in which he participated.

William Wycherley (c. 1640-1716) was the first Restoration dramatist to show markedly the influence of Molière. He was educated in France and came early under the influence of the great Frenchman. Two of Wycherley's best-known plays are adaptations from Molière. *The Country Wife* (1675) is indebted to both *L'École des Femmes* and *L'École des Maris*. *The Plain Dealer* (1676) owes something to Racine's *Les Plaideurs*, but was copied mainly from Molière's great play *Le Misanthrope*. The imitator, however, hardly deserves to be mentioned in the same breath with the master. Partly because his temperament was not French, and partly because he was not an actor but a member of the society he wrote of, Wycherley did not achieve the detachment of Molière, and he had no moral purpose. Whatever may be said of the wit of his plays or their value as indexes of the period, the fact remains that they—like most of the comedies of the Restoration—were too indecent long to deserve general reading or continual production. Interesting but unconvincing is the viewpoint of Charles Lamb in his essay "On the Artificial Comedy of the Last Century":

I do not know how it is with others, but I feel the better always for the perusal of one of Congreve's—nay, why should I not add even of Wycherley's—comedies. I am the gayer at least for it; and I could never connect those sports of a witty fancy in any shape with any result to be drawn from them to imitation in real life. They are a world of themselves almost as much as fairy land. Take one of their characters, male or female (with few exceptions they are alike), and place it in a modern play, and my virtuous indignation shall rise against the profligate wretch as warmly as the Catos of the pit could desire; because in a modern play I am to judge of the right and wrong. . . .

Translated into real life, the characters of his, and his friend Wycherley's dramas, are profligates and strumpets,—the business of their brief existence, the undivided pursuit of lawless gallantry. No other spring of action, or possible motive of conduct, is recognised; principles which, universally acted upon, must reduce this frame of things to a chaos. But we do them wrong in so translating them. No such effects are produced, in their world. When we are among them, we are amongst a chaotic people. We are not to judge them by our usages. No reverend institutions are insulted by their proceedings—for they have none among them. No peace of families is violated—for no family ties exist among them.

A conclusive reply was made by Macaulay in his essay on the "Comic Dramatists of the Restoration" (1841):

The morality of the Country Wife and the Old Bachelor is the morality, not, as Mr. Charles Lamb maintains, of an unreal world, but of a world which is a great deal too real. . . . The question is simply this, whether a man of genius who constantly and systematically endeavours to make . . . [evil] character attractive. . . . does or does not make an ill use of his powers. We own that we are unable to understand how this question can be answered in any way but one.

A voluminous author of comedy was Thomas Shadwell, best known now as the Whiggish laureate who displaced Dryden and as the butt of Dryden's famous couplet:

The rest to some faint meaning make pretence,
But Shadwell never deviates into sense.

Shadwell was of "the tribe of Ben" in drama. His more usually read plays are *Epsom Wells* (1672) and *Bury Fair* (1689). The latter, as its title implies, owes a direct obligation to Jonson's *Bartholomew Fair*.

Space among writers of comedy must be given to John Dryden (1631-1700), the opportunist who turned to any type which promised to be popular. Dryden's best-known comedies are *The Wild Gallant* (1663) and *Marriage à la Mode* (1672). They share the merits and defects of the intrigue comedy of the period, and are remembered today mainly as evidence of the versatility of their author in catering to the real or fancied tastes of his audience. Dryden was the greatest poet of his time and the greatest influence in the development of English prose style. He was also the "complete" Restoration dramatist. He was associated with the pioneer Davenant; he wrote the best heroic plays; he contributed to the comedy of the period; he achieved the prominence of being burlesqued in a play; he wrote one of the best tragedies of his time; and he was perhaps the best—as he is surely the best remembered—dramatic critic of the Restoration.

After William of Orange was safely on the throne at the end of the Stuart frivolities; after Etherege, Otway, and Lee were dead; and when Dryden, in the last decade of his life, was eking out a livelihood by translations, there occurred the belated finest flowering of Restoration high comedy. William Congreve, who was born as late as 1670 and ceased writing by 1700, produced in the last decade of the seventeenth century five plays: *The Old Bachelor* (January, 1693), *The Double-Dealer* (November, 1693), *Love for Love* (1695), *The Mourning Bride* (1698), and *The Way of the World* (1700). Three of these plays call for comment.

The Mourning Bride, Congreve's only tragedy, was carried to fame by the

acting of Mrs. Bracegirdle. It was long regarded as a masterpiece of tragedy and gave to the language several quotations such as

Music hath charms to soothe a savage breast
and
Hell hath no fury like a woman scorned.

Of all Congreve's plays *Love for Love* has the best plot and had the most successful run. Ben with the archaic language is the first important portrayal of a sailor in an English play; Prue harks back to *The Country Wife*; and Foresight is Jonsonian. The play also owes something to Molière's *L'Avare*. In spite of its original success, however, *Love for Love* has yielded to *The Way of the World* the position of being its author's chief claim to remembrance.

The Way of the World was not a stage success—and the reason is obvious to any one who has read it or seen it performed. The plot is baffling—almost impossible to seize upon until the end of the play. But the plot is not the thing. The brilliant portrayal of characters who mask real feeling behind their sophisticated repartee; the flashing dialogue, especially between Mirabell and Millamant, are unsurpassed on the English stage. The fine lady, Millamant, who struggles lest she "dwindle into a wife," the fine gentleman Mirabell, the aging but stern-hearted Lady Wishfort, the clever servants, Waitwell and Foible, the country knight, and even such subsidiary and similar characters as Witwoud and Petulant, are unforgettably portrayed. In the speeches of all characters there is a flashing wit. But even Mrs. Bracegirdle in Mrs. Millamant's important rôle did not make the play succeed in 1700. Recent revivals in London and New York have been successful; but their success merely means that among residents in centers of great population and among the visitors thither there are enough scholarly or curious people to give vogue to a Congreve play. It has even been suggested that *The Way of the World* is closet-drama. On the other hand, Hazlitt, Meredith, and others have glorified Congreve's style. If his plays do not belong to surviving drama, they belong perhaps to literature.

Usually associated in name with Congreve is John Vanbrugh (1664-1726). Like the later dramatist-general, Burgoyne, Vanbrugh was a very versatile man. He held government posts and was the architect of "Blenheim," the gift of the nation to the victorious Duke of Marlborough.

Lie heavy on him, Earth, for he
Laid many heavy loads on thee,

ran a mock epitaph on the architect; but Vanbrugh's dramas were lighter in touch. *The Relapse, or Virtue in Danger* (1696) and *The Provoked Wife* (1697) are his best-known plays. Vanbrugh shared the fashion of his age in morals. He and Congreve, the "Orange" comedians, are the last comic dramatists strictly of the Restoration school.

The Puritan spirit had not spent itself or been crushed out under the restored Stuarts, and the disgust with Restoration drama found a forceful utterance in 1698. In this year when Congreve's glory—increased by the performance of the inimitable Mistress Bracegirdle—was at its height, Jeremy Collier, a theologian, issued a book entitled *A Short View of the Immorality and Profaneness of the English Stage*.

Whatever excuse may be offered for Restoration comedy, the truth remains that there are many plays and many scenes which are nothing other than pornographic. Collier pointed out specifically some of the worst passages, asked what defense could be made of them, and demanded that the drama cease its immorality, its profaneness, and its attack on the clergy.

Collier was more than successful. Public opinion backed his demands, and existing laws for the regulation of the drama began to be enforced. Among playwrights whom Collier attacked were Vanbrugh and Congreve—and his influence may have been potent in their later careers. Congreve's next play was his last—and Vanbrugh's later efforts hardly came up to *The Relapse* and *The Provoked Wife*.

The stars of the Restoration comic firmament have been listed as five—Etherege, Wycherley, Congreve, Vanbrugh, and Farquhar. George Farquhar (1678-1707), who was twenty years old when Collier launched his "protest," had the ability to profit somewhat by it and yet hold to all that was best in the older comedy of manners. His two remembered plays were produced on the eve of his early death—*The Recruiting Officer* in 1706 and *The Beaux' Stratagem* in 1707. These plays in many respects marked an advance in drama. The narrow canvas of London society life is discarded in favor of a wide one on which many scenes and differing characters may be painted. In *The Beaux' Stratagem*, for instance, one finds the city dandy, but one also finds country aristocrats of differing types, soldiers, even of different nations, a rural inn-keeper, and highwaymen. *The Beaux' Stratagem* is not a moral play, but its breath of country air was at least helpful, and many of its innovations were destined to be influential for more than a generation. The character Cherry would seem to have been a familiar allusion as late as the year of Goldsmith's *She Stoops to Conquer*. Highwaymen stalked from *The Beaux' Stratagem* permanently into the field of English literature. Sheridan owed much to this and others of Farquhar's plays. When all has been said, however, *The Beaux' Stratagem* and Farquhar belong essentially rather to the Restoration than to the eighteenth century. The typical dramatic product of the early years of the great age of prose and reason was the sentimental comedy.

THE BEAUX' STRATAGEM

GEORGE FARQUHAR

ADVERTISEMENT—The reader may find some faults in this play which my illness prevented the amending of; but there is great amends made in the representation, which cannot be matched, no more than the friendly and indefatigable care of Mr. Wilks, to whom I chiefly owe the success of the play.—GEORGE FARQUHAR

CHARACTERS

AIMWELL } *two gentlemen of broken for-*
ARCHER } *tures, the first as master, and*
 } *the second as servant.*

COUNT BELLAIR, *a French officer, prisoner at Litchfield.*

SULLEN, *a country blockhead, brutal to his wife.*

FREEMAN, *a gentleman from London.*

FOIGARD, *a priest, chaplain to the French officers.*

GIBBET, *a highwayman.*

HOUNSLOW } *his companions.*

BAGSHOT }

BONNIFACE, *landlord of the inn.*

SCRUB, *servant to Mr. SULLEN.*

LADY BOUNTIFUL } *an old, civil country gentlewoman that cures all her neighbors of all distempers, and foolishly fond of her son*
 } *SULLEN.*

DORINDA, *LADY BOUNTIFUL'S daughter.*

MRS. SULLEN, *her daughter-in-law.*

GIPSEY, *maid to the ladies.*

CHERRY, *the landlord's daughter in the inn.*

A Country Woman.

SCENE—Litchfield.

TIME—Contemporary.

PROLOGUE

When strife disturbs, or sloth corrupts
 an age,

Keen satire is the business of the stage.

When the *Plain Dealer*¹ writ, he lashed
 those crimes

¹ Wycherley.

Which then infested most—the modish
 times:

But now, when faction sleeps and sloth
 is fled,

And all our youth in active fields are
 bred;

When thro' Great Britain's fair exten-
 sive round,

The trumps of fame the notes of Union
 sound;

When Anna's scepter points the laws
 their course,

And her example gives her precepts
 force:

There scarce is room for satire; all our
 lays

Must be or songs of triumph or of
 praise.

But as in grounds best cultivated,
 tares

And poppies rise among the golden
 ears;

Our products so, fit for the field or
 school,

Must mix with nature's favorite plant
 —a fool:

A weed that has to twenty summers
 ran,

Shoots up in stalk, and vegetates to
 man.

Simpling our author goes from field to
 field,

And culls such fools as may diversion
 yield:

And, thanks to Nature, there's no want
 of those,

For, rain or shine, the thriving cock-
 comb grows.

Follies to-night we show ne'er lashed
 before,

Yet such as nature shows you every hour;
Nor can the pictures give a just offence,
For fools are made for jests to men of sense.

ACT I

SCENE I.

An Inn

[Enter BONNIFACE running.]

BON. Chamberlain! Maid! Cherry! Daughter Cherry! All asleep? all dead?

[Enter CHERRY running.]

CHER. Here, here! Why d'ye bawl so, father? D'ye think we have no ears?

BON. You deserve to have none, you young minx! The company of the Warrington coach² has stood in the hall this hour, and nobody to show them to their chambers.

CHER. And let 'em wait farther; there's neither red-coat in the coach, nor footman behind it.

BON. But they threaten to go to another inn to-night.

CHER. That they dare not, for fear the coachman should overturn them to-morrow.—Coming! coming!—Here's the London coach arrived.

[Enter several people with trunks, bandboxes, and other luggage, and cross the stage.]

BON. Welcome, ladies!

CHER. Very welcome, gentlemen!—Chamberlain, show the *Lion* and the *Rose*.³ [Exit with the company.]

[Enter AIMWELL in riding habit, ARCHER as footman carrying a portmanteau.⁴]

BON. This way, this way, gentlemen!

AIM. Set down the things; go to the stable and see my horses well rubbed.

² in Lancashire, and so from a country district.

³ chambers named from their hangings.

⁴ portmanteau.

ARC. I shall, sir. [Exit.]

AIM. You're my landlord, I suppose?

BON. Yes, sir, I'm old Will Boniface—pretty well known upon this road, as the saying is.

AIM. O! Mr. Boniface, your servant.

BON. O sir—What will your honor please to drink, as the saying is?

AIM. I have heard your town of Litchfield much famed for ale; I think I'll taste that.

BON. Sir, I have now in my cellar ten tun of the best ale in Staffordshire; 'tis smooth as oil, sweet as milk, clear as amber, and strong as brandy; and will be just fourteen year old the fifth day of next March, old style.

AIM. You're very exact, I find, in the age of your ale.

BON. As punctual, sir, as I am in the age of my children. I'll show you such ale!—here, tapster, broach number 1706, as the saying is.—Sir, you shall taste my *Anno Domini*.—I have lived in Litchfield, man and boy, above eight and fifty years, and, I believe, have not consumed eight and fifty ounces of meat.

AIM. At a meal, you mean, if one may guess your sense by your bulk.

BON. Not in my life, sir. I have fed purely upon ale; I have eat my ale, drank my ale, and I always sleep upon ale.

[Enter Tapster with a bottle and glass.]

Now, sir, you shall see!—[filling it out.] Your worship's health.—Ha! delicious, delicious—fancy it burgundy, only fancy it! and 'tis worth ten shillings a quart.

AIM. [drinks.] 'Tis confounded strong!

BON. Strong! It must be so, or how should we be strong that drink it?

AIM. And have you lived so long upon this ale, landlord?

BON. Eight and fifty years, upon my credit, sir—but it killed my wife, poor woman, as the saying is.

AIM. How came that to pass?

BON. I don't know how, sir; she

would not let the ale take its natural course, sir; she was for qualifying it every now and then with a dram, as the saying is; and an honest gentleman that came this way from Ireland made her a present of a dozen bottles of usquebaugh⁵—but the poor woman was never well after: but, howe'er, I was obliged to the gentleman, you know.

AIM. Why, was it the usquebaugh that killed her?

BON. My Lady Bountiful said so. She, good lady, did what could be done; she cured her of three tympanies,⁶ but the fourth carried her off. But she's happy, and I'm contented, as the saying is.

AIM. Who's that Lady Bountiful you mentioned?

BON. 'Ods my life, sir, we'll drink her health. [*drinks.*] My Lady Bountiful is one of the best of women. Her last husband, Sir Charles Bountiful, left her worth a thousand pound a year; and, I believe, she lays out one half on't in charitable uses for the good of her neighbors. She cures rheumatisms, ruptures, and broken shins in men; green-sickness, obstructions, and fits of the mother⁷ in women; the kings-evil,⁸ chin-cough, and chilblains in children: in short, she has cured more people in and about Litchfield within ten years than the doctors have killed in twenty; and that's a bold word.

AIM. Has the lady been any other way useful in her generation?

BON. Yes, sir; she has a daughter by Sir Charles, the finest woman in all our country, and the greatest fortune. She has a son too, by her first husband, Squire Sullen, who married a fine lady from London t'other day; if you please, sir, we'll drink his health.

AIM. What sort of a man is he?

BON. Why, sir, the man's well enough; says little, thinks less, and does—nothing at all, faith. But he's a man of great estate, and values nobody.

AIM. A sportsman, I suppose?

BON. Yes, sir, he's a man of pleasure; he plays at whisk⁹ and smokes his pipe eight and forty hours together sometimes.

AIM. And married, you say?

BON. Aye, and to a curious woman, sir. But he's a—he wants it here, sir.

[*Pointing to his forehead.*]

AIM. He has it there, you mean?

BON. That's none of my business; he's my landlord, and so a man, you know, would not—But—I cod, he's no better than—Sir, my humble service to you.—[*drinks.*] Tho' I value not a farthing what he can do to me, I pay him his rent at quarter day; I have a good running trade. I have but one daughter, and I can give her—but no matter for that.

AIM. You're very happy, Mr. Boniface. Pray, what other company have you in town?

BON. A power of fine ladies; and then we have the French officers.

AIM. Oh, that's right, you have a good many of those gentlemen. Pray, how do you like their company?

BON. So well, as the saying is, that I could wish we had as many more of 'em; they're full of money and pay double for everything they have. They know, sir, that we paid good round taxes for the taking of 'em, and so they are willing to reimburse us a little. One of 'em lodges in my house.

[*Enter ARCHER.*]

ARC. Landlord, there are some French gentlemen below that ask for you.

BON. I'll wait on 'em.—[*to ARCHER.*] Does your master stay long in town, as the saying is?

ARC. I can't tell, as the saying is.

BON. Come from London?

ARC. No.

BON. Going to London, may hap?

ARC. No.

BON. An odd fellow this.—I beg your worship's pardon, I'll wait on you in half a minute. [*Exit.*]

AIM. The coast's clear, I see.—Now, my dear Archer, welcome to Litchfield.

⁵ a strong cordial.

⁶ attacks of wind dropsy.

⁷ hysterics.

⁸ scrofula.

⁹ whist.

ARC. I thank thee, my dear brother in iniquity.

AIM. Iniquity! prithee, leave canting; you need not change your style with your dress.

ARC. Don't mistake me, Aimwell, for 'tis still my maxim that there is no scandal like rags nor any crime so shameful as poverty.

AIM. The world confesses it every day in its practice, tho' men won't own it for their opinion. Who did that worthy lord, my brother, single out of the side-box to sup with him t'other night?

ARC. Jack Handycraft, a handsome, well dressed, mannerly, sharpening rogue, who keeps the best company in town.

AIM. Right. And pray, who married my lady Manslaughter t'other day, the great fortune?

ARC. Why, Nick Marrabone, a professed pickpocket and a good bowler; but he makes a handsome figure and rides in his coach, that he formerly used to ride behind.

AIM. But did you observe poor Jack Generous in the park last week?

ARC. Yes, with his autumnal periwig shading his melancholy face, his coat older than anything but its fashion, with one hand idle in his pocket, and with the other picking his useless teeth; and tho' the Mall was crowded with company, yet was poor Jack as single and solitary as a lion in a desert.

AIM. And as much avoided, for no crime upon earth but the want of money.

ARC. And that's enough. Men must not be poor; idleness is the root of all evil; the world's wide enough—let 'em bustle. Fortune has taken the weak under her protection, but men of sense are left to their industry.

AIM. Upon which topic we proceed, and, I think, luckily hitherto. Would not any man swear, now, that I am a man of quality, and you my servant, when if our intrinsic value were known—

ARC. Come, come, we are the men of intrinsic value who can strike our fortunes out of ourselves, whose worth

is independent of accidents in life or revolutions in government: we have heads to get money and hearts to spend it.

AIM. As to our hearts, I grant ye they are as willing tits as any within twenty degrees: but I can have no great opinion of our heads from the service they have done us hitherto, unless it be that they have brought us from London hither to Litchfield, made me a lord, and you my servant.

ARC. That's more than you could expect already. But what money have we left?

AIM. But two hundred pound.

ARC. And our horses, clothes, rings, etc.—Why, we have very good fortunes now for moderate people; and, let me tell you besides, that this two hundred pound, with the experience that we are now masters of, is a better estate than the ten we have spent.—Our friends, indeed, began to suspect that our pockets were low, but we came off with flying colors—showed no signs of want either in word or deed.

AIM. Aye, and our going to Brussels was a good pretence enough for our sudden disappearing; and, I warrant you, our friends imagine that we are gone a-volunteering.

ARC. Why, faith, if this prospect fails, it must e'en come to that. I am for venturing one of the hundreds, if you will, upon this knight-errantry; but in case it should fail, we'll reserve the t'other to carry us to some counterscarp,¹⁰ where we may die, as we lived, in a blaze.

AIM. With all my heart; and we have lived justly, Archer: we can't say that we have spent our fortunes but that we have enjoyed 'em.

ARC. Right: so much pleasure for so much money. We have had our penny-worths; and, had I millions, I would go to the same market again.—O London, London!—Well, we have had our share, and let us be thankful. Past pleasures, for aught I know, are best, such as we are sure of: those to come may disappoint us.

¹⁰ outer wall of a ditch protecting a fort.

AIM. It has often grieved the heart of me to see how some inhuman wretches murder their kind fortunes—those that, by sacrificing all to one appetite, shall starve all the rest. You shall have some that live only in their palates, and in their sense of tasting shall drown the other four: others are only epicures in appearances, such who shall starve their nights to make a figure a-days, and famish their own to feed the eyes of others: a contrary sort confine their pleasures to the dark, and contract their spacious acres to the circuit of a muff-string.

ARC. Right! But they find the Indies in that spot where they consume 'em, and I think your kind keepers have much the best on't: for they indulge the most senses by one expense; there's the seeing, hearing, and feeling, amply gratified. And some philosophers will tell you that from such a commerce there arises a sixth sense, that gives infinitely more pleasure than the other five put together.

AIM. And to pass to the other extremity, of all keepers I think those the worst that keep their money.

ARC. Those are the most miserable wights in being; they destroy the rights of nature and disappoint the blessings of Providence. Give me a man that keeps his five senses keen and bright as his sword, that has 'em always drawn out in their just order and strength, with his reason as commander at the head of 'em; that detaches 'em by turns upon whatever party of pleasure agreeably offers, and commands 'em to retreat upon the least appearance of disadvantage or danger. For my part, I can stick to my bottle while my wine, my company, and my reason, holds good; I can be charmed with Sappho's singing without falling in love with her face; I love hunting, but would not, like Actaeon, be eaten up by my own dogs; I love a fine house, but let another keep it: and just so I love a fine woman.

AIM. In that last particular you have the better of me.

ARC. Aye, you're such an amorous

puppy that I'm afraid you'll spoil our sport; you can't counterfeit the passion without feeling it.

AIM. Tho' the whining part be out of doors¹¹ in town, 'tis still in force with the country ladies.—And let me tell you, Frank, the fool in that passion shall outdo the knave at any time.

ARC. Well, I won't dispute it now; you command for the day, and so I submit.—At Nottingham, you know, I am to be master.

AIM. And at Lincoln, I again.

ARC. Then, at Norwich I mount, which, I think, shall be our last stage; for, if we fail there, we'll embark for Holland, bid adieu to Venus, and welcome Mars.

AIM. A match!—

[Enter BONNIFACE.]

Mum!

BON. What will your worship please to have for supper?

AIM. What have you got?

BON. Sir, we have a delicate piece of beef in the pot, and a pig at the fire.

AIM. Good supper-meat, I must confess.—I can't eat beef, landlord.

ARC. And I hate pig.

AIM. Hold your prating, sirrah! Do you know who you are?

BON. Please to bespeak something else; I have everything in the house.

AIM. Have you any veal?

BON. Veal! Sir, we had a delicate loin of veal on Wednesday last.

AIM. Have you got any fish or wild-fowl?

BON. As for fish, truly, sir, we are an inland town, and indifferently provided with fish—that's the truth on't; and then for wildfowl—we have a delicate couple of rabbits.

AIM. Get me the rabbits fricassee'd.

BON. Fricassee'd! Lard, sir, they'll eat much better smothered with onions!

ARC. Pshaw! Damn your onions!

AIM. Again, sirrah!—Well, landlord, what you please. But hold, I have a small charge of money, and your house is so full of strangers that I believe it may be safer in your custody.

¹¹ out of fashion.

than mine; for when this fellow of mine gets drunk he minds nothing.—Here, sirrah, reach me the strong box.

ARC. Yes, sir.—[*aside.*] This will give us a reputation. [*Brings the box.*]

AIM. Here, landlord. The locks are sealed down both for your security and mine. It holds somewhat above two hundred pound: if you doubt it, I'll count it to you after supper. But be sure you lay it where I may have it at a minute's warning, for my affairs are a little dubious at present; perhaps I may be gone in half an hour, perhaps I may be your guest till the best part of that be spent: and pray order your ostler to keep my horses always saddled. But one thing above the rest I must beg, that you would let this fellow have none of your *Anno Domini*, as you call it; for he's the most insufferable sot.—Here, sirrah, light me to my chamber.

[*Exit, lighted by ARCHER.*]

BON. Cherry! Daughter Cherry!

[*Enter CHERRY.*]

CHER. D'y'e call, father?

BON. Aye, child, you must lay by this box for the gentleman; 'tis full of money.

CHER. Money! all that money! Why, sure, father, the gentleman comes to be chosen parliament-man. Who is he?

BON. I don't know what to make of him; he talks of keeping his horses ready saddled, and of going perhaps at a minute's warning, or of staying perhaps till the best part of this be spent.

CHER. Aye, ten to one, father, he's a highwayman.

BON. A highwayman! Upon my life, girl, you have hit it, and this box is some new-purchased booty. Now, could we find him out, the money were ours.

CHER. He don't belong to our gang.

BON. What horses have they?

CHER. The master rides upon a black.

BON. A black! ten to one the man upon the black mare; and since he don't belong to our fraternity, we may

betray him with a safe conscience. I don't think it lawful to harbor any rogues but my own.—Look ye, child, as the saying is, we must go cunningly to work; proofs we must have. The gentleman's servant loves drink; I'll ply him that way: and ten to one loves a wench; you must work him t'other way.

CHER. Father, would you have me give my secret for his?

BON. Consider, child, there's two hundred pound to boot.—[*ringing without.*] Coming! coming!—Child, mind your business. [*Exit.*]

CHER. What a rogue is my father! My father? I deny it. My mother was a good, generous, free-hearted woman, and I can't tell how far her good nature might have extended for the good of her children. This landlord of mine, for I think I can call him no more, would betray his guest and debauch his daughter into the bargain—by a footman too!

[*Enter ARCHER.*]

ARC. What footman, pray, mistress, is so happy as to be the subject of your contemplation?

CHER. Whoever he is, friend, he'll be but little the better for't.

ARC. I hope so, for I'm sure you did not think of me.

CHER. Suppose I had?

ARC. Why, then you're but even with me; for the minute I came in, I was a-considering in what manner I should make love to you.

CHER. Love to me, friend!

ARC. Yes, child.

CHER. Child! Manners!—If you kept a little more distance, friend, it would become you much better.

ARC. Distance! Good night, sauce-box. [*Going.*]

CHER. A pretty fellow! I like his pride.—Sir, pray, sir, you see, sir. [*ARCHER returns.*] I have the credit to be entrusted with your master's fortune here, which sets me a degree above his footman; I hope, sir, you an't affronted?

ARC. Let me look you full in the

face, and I'll tell you whether you can affront me or no.—'Sdeath, child, you have a pair of delicate eyes, and you don't know what to do with 'em!

CHER. Why, sir, don't I see everybody?

ARC. Aye, but if some women had em, they would kill everybody. Prithee, instruct me; I would fain make love to you, but I don't know what to say.

CHER. Why did you never make love to anybody before?

ARC. Never to a person of your figure, I can assure you, madam. My addresses have been always confined to people within my own sphere; I never aspired so high before.

SONG ²²

But you look so bright,
And are dressed so tight,
[That a man would swear you're right,
As arm was e'er laid over.
Such an air
You freely wear
To ensnare,
As makes each guest a lover!

Since then, my dear, I'm your guest,
Prithee give me of the best
Of what is ready drest:
Since then, my dear, etc.]

CHER. [*aside.*] What can I think of this man?—Will you give me that song, sir?

ARC. Aye, my dear; take it while 'tis warm. [*kisses her.*] Death and fire! her lips are honeycombs.

CHER. And I wish there had been bees too, to have stung you for your impudence.

ARC. There's a swarm of Cupids, my little Venus, that has done the business much better.

CHER. [*aside.*] This fellow is misbegotten as well as I.—What's your name, sir?

ARC. [*aside.*] Name! I gad, I have forgot it.—Oh, Martin.

CHER. Where were you born?

ARC. In St. Martin's parish.

CHER. What was your father?

ARC. St. Martin's parish.

CHER. Then, friend, good night.

ARC. I hope not.

CHER. You may depend upon't.

ARC. Upon what?

CHER. That you're very impudent.

ARC. That you're very handsome.

CHER. That you're a footman.

ARC. That you're an angel.

CHER. I shall be rude.

ARC. So shall I.

CHER. Let go my hand.

ARC. Give me a kiss. [*Kisses her.*]
[*Call without.*] Cherry! Cherry!

CHER. I'm—My father calls. You plaguy devil, how durst you stop my breath so?—Offer to follow me one step, if you dare. [*Exit.*]

ARC. A fair challenge, by this light! This is a pretty fair opening of an adventure; but we are knight-errants, and so Fortune be our guide. [*Exit.*]

ACT II

SCENE I.

A Gallery in LADY BOUNTIFUL'S House

[*Enter MRS. SULLEN and DORINDA, meeting.*]

DOR. Morrow, my dear sister; are you for church this morning?

MRS. S. Anywhere to pray, for Heaven alone can help me. But I think, Dorinda, there's no form of prayer in the liturgy against bad husbands.

DOR. But there's a form of law in Doctors-Commons; and I swear, sister Sullen, rather than see you thus continually discontented, I would advise you to apply to that. For besides the part that I bear in your vexatious broils, as being sister to the husband and friend to the wife, your example gives me such an impression of matrimony that I shall be apt to condemn my person to a long vacation all its life. But supposing, madam, that you brought it to a case of separation, what can you urge against your husband? My brother is, first, the most constant man alive.

²² first given in full in the 1721 edition.

Mrs. S. The most constant husband, I grant ye.

DOR. He never sleeps from you.

Mrs. S. No, he always sleeps with me.

DOR. He allows you a maintenance suitable to your quality.

Mrs. S. A maintenance! Do you take me, madam, for an hospital child, that I must sit down and bless my benefactors for meat, drink, and clothes? As I take it, madam, I brought your brother ten thousand pounds, out of which I might expect some pretty things called "pleasures."

DOR. You share in all the pleasures that the country affords.

Mrs. S. Country-pleasures! Racks and torments! Dost think, child, that my limbs were made for leaping of ditches, and clamb'ring over stiles? or that my parents, wisely foreseeing my future happiness in country-pleasures, had early instructed me in the rural accomplishments of drinking fat ale, playing at whisk, and smoking tobacco with my husband? or of spreading of plasters, brewing of diet-drinks, and stilling rosemary-water, with the good old gentlewoman my mother-in-law?

DOR. I'm sorry, madam, that it is not more in our power to divert you; I could wish, indeed, that our entertainments were a little more polite, or your taste a little less refined. But pray, madam, how came the poets and philosophers, that labored so much in hunting after pleasure, to place it at last in a country life?

Mrs. S. Because they wanted money, child, to find out the pleasures of the town. Did you ever see a poet or philosopher worth ten thousand pound? If you can show me such a man, I'll lay you fifty pound you'll find him somewhere within the weekly bills.¹³ Not that I disapprove rural pleasures as the poets have painted them; in their landscape, every Phyllis has her Coridon, every murmuring stream and every flow'ry mead gives fresh alarms to love. Besides, you'll find that their couples were never mar-

ried.—But yonder I see my Coridon, and a sweet swain it is, Heaven knows! Come, Dorinda, don't be angry; he's my husband, and your brother: and, between both, is he not a sad brute?

DOR. I have nothing to say to your part of him; you're the best judge.

Mrs. S. O sister, sister! if ever you marry, beware of a sullen, silent sot, one that's always musing, but never thinks. There's some diversion in a talking blockhead; and since a woman must wear chains, I would have the pleasure of hearing 'em rattle a little. Now you shall see; but take this by the way:—He came home this morning at his usual hour of four, wakened me out of a sweet dream of something else by tumbling over the tea-table, which he broke all to pieces; after his man and he had rolled about the room like sick passengers in a storm, he comes flounce into bed, dead as a salmon into a fishmonger's basket—his feet cold as ice, his breath hot as a furnace, and his hands and his face as greasy as his flannel night-cap.—Oh, matrimony! He tosses up the clothes with a barbarous swing over his shoulders, disorders the whole economy of my bed, leaves me half naked, and my whole night's comfort is the tuneable serenade of that wakeful nightingale, his nose! Oh, the pleasure of counting the melancholy clock by a snoring husband!—But now, sister, you shall see how handsomely, being a well-bred man, he will beg my pardon.

[Enter SULLEN.]

SUL. My head aches consumedly.

Mrs. S. Will you be pleased, my dear, to drink tea with us this morning? It may do your head good.

SUL. No.

DOR. Coffee, brother?

SUL. Pshaw!

Mrs. S. Will you please to dress and go to church with me? The air may help you.

SUL. [calls.] Scrub!

[Enter SCRUB.]

SCR. Sir.

¹³ lists of births and deaths in London.

SUL. What day o' th' week is this?

SCR. Sunday, an't please your worship.

SUL. Sunday! bring me a dram; and d'ye hear, set out the venison-pasty and a tankard of strong beer upon the hall-table. I'll go to breakfast.

[*Going.*]

DOR. Stay, stay, brother, you shan't get off so; you were very naught last night, and must make your wife reparation. Come, come, brother, won't you ask pardon?

SUL. For what?

DOR. For being drunk last night.

SUL. I can afford it, can't I?

MRS. S. But I can't, sir.

SUL. Then you may let it alone.

MRS. S. But I must tell you, sir, that this is not to be borne.

SUL. I'm glad on't.

MRS. S. What is the reason, sir, that you use me thus inhumanely?

SUL. Scrub!

SCR. Sir?

SUL. Get things ready to shave my head.

[*Exit SULLEN.*]

MRS. S. Have a care of coming near his temples, Scrub, for fear you meet something there that may turn the edge of your razor.—

[*Exit SCRUB.*]

Inveterate stupidity! Did you ever know so hard, so obstinate a spleen as his? O sister, sister! I shall never ha' good of the beast till I get him to town. London, dear London, is the place for managing and breaking a husband.

DOR. And has not a husband the same opportunities there for humbling a wife?

MRS. S. No, no, child, 'tis a standing maxim in conjugal discipline that when a man would enslave his wife, he hurries her into the country; and when a lady would be arbitrary with her husband, she wheedles her booby up to town. A man dare not play the tyrant in London, because there are so many examples to encourage the subject to rebel. O Dorinda, Dorinda! a fine woman may do anything in London: o' my conscience, she may raise an army of forty thousand men.

DOR. I fancy, sister, you have a

mind to be trying your power that way here in Litchfield; you have drawn the French count to your colors already.

MRS. S. The French are a people that can't live without their gallantries.

DOR. And some English that I know, sister, are not averse to such amusements.

MRS. S. Well, sister, since the truth must out, it may do as well now as hereafter; I think one way to rouse my lethargic, sottish husband is to give him a rival. Security begets negligence in all people, and men must be alarmed to make 'em alert in their duty. Women are, like pictures, of no value in the hands of a fool till he hears men of sense bid high for the purchase.

DOR. This might do, sister, if my brother's understanding were to be convinced into a passion for you, but I fancy there's a natural aversion of his side; and I fancy, sister, that you don't come much behind him, if you dealt fairly.

MRS. S. I own it; we are united contradictions—fire and water. But I could be contented, with a great many other wives, to humor the censorious mob and give the world an appearance of living well with my husband, could I bring him but to dissemble a little kindness to keep me in countenance.

DOR. But how do you know, sister, but that instead of rousing your husband by this artifice to a counterfeit kindness, he should awake in a real fury?

MRS. S. Let him: if I can't entice him to the one, I would provoke him to the other.

DOR. But how must I behave myself between ye?

MRS. S. You must assist me.

DOR. What, against my own brother!

MRS. S. He's but half a brother, and I'm your entire friend. If I go a step beyond the bounds of honor, leave me; till then, I expect you should go along with me in everything. While I trust my honor in your hands, you may trust your brother's in mine.—The count is to dine here to-day.

DOR. 'Tis a strange thing, sister, that I can't like that man.

MRS. S. You like nothing; your time is not come. Love and death have their fatalities, and strike home one time or other; you'll pay for all one day, I warrant ye.—But come, my lady's tea is ready, and 'tis almost church-time. *[Exeunt.]*

SCENE II.

The Inn

[Enter AIMWELL, dressed, and ARCHER.]

AIM. And was she the daughter of the house?

ARC. The landlord is so blind as to think so, but I dare swear she has better blood in her veins.

AIM. Why dost think so?

ARC. Because the baggage has a pert *je ne sais quoi*; ¹⁴ she reads plays, keeps a monkey, and is troubled with vapors.

AIM. By which discoveries I guess that you know more of her.

ARC. Not yet, faith. The lady gives herself airs: "Forsooth, nothing under a gentleman!"

AIM. Let me take her in hand.

ARC. Say one word more o' that, and I'll declare myself, spoil your sport there and everywhere else. Look ye, Aimwell, every man in his own sphere.

AIM. Right; and therefore you must pimp for your master.

ARC. In the usual forms, good sir, after I have served myself.—But to our business. You are so well dressed, Tom, and make so handsome a figure, that I fancy you may do execution in a country church; the exterior part strikes first, and you're in the right to make that impression favorable.

AIM. There's something in that which may turn to advantage. The appearance of a stranger in a country church draws as many gazers as a blazing star; no sooner he comes into the cathedral, but a train of whispers runs buzzing round the congregation in a

¹⁴ I know not what.

moment:—Who is he? Whence comes he? Do you know him?—Then I, sir, tips me the verger with half a crown; he pockets the simony, and inducts me into the best pew in the church. I pull out my snuff-box, turn myself round, bow to the bishop, or the dean, if he be the commanding officer; single out a beauty, rivet both my eyes to hers, set my nose a-bleeding by the strength of imagination, and show the whole church my concern by my endeavoring to hide it. After the sermon, the whole town gives me to her for a lover, and by persuading the lady that I am a-dying for her, the tables are turned, and she in good earnest falls in love with me.

ARC. There's nothing in this, Tom, without a precedent. But instead of riveting your eyes to a beauty, try to fix 'em upon a fortune; that's our business at present.

AIM. Pshaw! no woman can be a beauty without a fortune. Let me alone, for I am a marksman.

ARC. Tom!

AIM. Aye.

ARC. When were you at church before, pray?

AIM. Um—I was there at the coronation.¹⁵

ARC. And how can you expect a blessing by going to church now?

AIM. Blessing! nay, Frank, I ask but for a wife. *[Exit.]*

ARC. Truly, the man is not very unreasonable in his demands.

[Exit at the opposite door.]

[Enter BONNIFACE and CHERRY.]

BON. Well, daughter, as the saying is, have you brought Martin to confess?

CHER. Pray, father, don't put me upon getting anything out of a man; I'm but young, you know, father, and I don't understand wheedling.

BON. Young! why, you jade, as the saying is, can any woman wheedle that is not young? Your mother was useless at five and twenty. Not wheedle! would you make your mother a whore,

¹⁵ April 23, 1702.

and me a cuckold, as the saying is? I tell you, his silence confesses it, and his master spends his money so freely and is so much a gentleman every manner of way, that he must be a highwayman.

[Enter GIBBET, in a cloak.]

GIB. Landlord, landlord, is the coast clear?

BON. O Mr. Gibbet, what's the news?

GIB. No matter, ask no questions; all fair and honorable.—Here, my dear Cherry.—[gives her a bag.] Two hundred sterling pounds, as good as any that ever hanged or saved a rogue; lay 'em by with the rest; and here—three wedding or mourning rings—'tis much the same, you know.—Here, two silver-hilted swords; I took those from fellows that never show any part of their swords but the hilts. Here is a diamond necklace which the lady hid in the privatest place in the coach, but I found it out.—This gold watch I took from a pawn-broker's wife. It was left in her hands by a person of quality—there's the arms upon the case.

CHER. But who had you the money from?

GIB. Ah! poor woman! I pitied her;—from a poor lady just eloped from her husband. She had made up her cargo, and was bound for Ireland as hard as she could drive; she told me of her husband's barbarous usage, and so I left her half a crown. But I had almost forgot, my dear Cherry; I have a present for you.

CHER. What is't?

GIB. A pot of cereuse,¹⁶ my child, that I took out of a lady's under pocket.

CHER. What, Mr. Gibbet, do you think that I paint?

GIB. Why, you jade, your betters do; I'm sure the lady that I took it from had a coronet upon her handkerchief.—Here, take my cloak, and go secure the premises.

CHER. I will secure 'em. [Exit.]

BON. But hark ye, where's Hounslow and Bagshot?

GIB. They'll be here to-night.

BON. D'ye know of any other gentlemen o' the pad on this road?

GIB. No.

BON. I fancy that I have two that lodge in the house just now.

GIB. The devil! How d'ye smoke 'em?

BON. Why, the one is gone to church.

GIB. That's suspicious, I must confess.

BON. And the other is now in his master's chamber; he pretends to be servant to the other. We'll call him out and pump him a little.

GIB. With all my heart.

BON. Mr. Martin! Mr. Martin!

[Enter ARCHER combing a periwig and singing.]

GIB. The roads are consumed deep; I'm as dirty as old Brentford at Christmas.—A good pretty fellow that. Whose servant are you, friend?

ARC. My master's.

GIB. Really!

ARC. Really.

GIB. That's much.—The fellow has been at the bar, by his evasions.—But pray, sir, what is your master's name?

ARC. *Tall, all, dall!*—[sings and combs the periwig.] This is the most obstinate curl—

GIB. I ask you his name.

ARC. Name, sir—*tall, all, dall!*—I never asked him his name in my life—*Tall, all, dall!*

BON. What think you now?

GIB. Plain, plain; he talks now as if he were before a judge.—But pray, friend, which way does your master travel?

ARC. A-horseback.

GIB. Very well again; an old offender, right.—But, I mean, does he go upwards or downwards?

ARC. Downwards, I fear, sir.—*Tall, all!*

GIB. I'm afraid my fate will be a contrary way.¹⁷

BON. Ha! ha! ha! Mr. Martin, you're very arch. This gentleman is

¹⁶ cosmetic.

¹⁷ up the gallows.

only travelling towards Chester, and would be glad of your company, that's all.—Come, Captain, you'll stay to-night, I suppose? I'll show you a chamber.—Come, Captain.

[Exit BONNIFACE.]

GIB. Farewell, friend! [Exit.]

ARC. Captain, your servant.—Captain! a pretty fellow! 'Sdeath, I wonder that the officers of the army don't conspire to beat all scoundrels in red but their own.

[Enter CHERRY.]

CHER. [aside.] Gone, and Martin here! I hope he did not listen; I would have the merit of the discovery all my own, because I would oblige him to love me.—Mr. Martin, who was that man with my father?

ARC. Some recruiting sergeant or whipped-out trooper, I suppose.

CHER. [aside.] All's safe, I find.

ARC. Come, my dear, have you conned over the catechise I taught you last night?

CHER. Come, question me.

ARC. What is love?

CHER. Love is I know not what, it comes I know not how, and goes I know not when.

ARC. Very well, an apt scholar.—[chucks her under the chin.] Where does love enter?

CHER. Into the eyes.

ARC. And where go out?

CHER. I won't tell ye.

ARC. What are objects of that passion?

CHER. Youth, beauty, and clean linen.

ARC. The reason?

CHER. The two first are fashionable in nature, and the third at court.

ARC. That's my dear.—What are the signs and tokens of that passion?

CHER. A stealing look, a stammering tongue, words improbable, designs impossible, and actions impracticable.

ARC. That's my good child! Kiss me.—What must a lover do to obtain his mistress?

CHER. He must adore the person that disdains him, he must bribe the

chambermaid that betrays him, and court the footman that laughs at him. He must—he must—

ARC. Nay, child, I must whip you if you don't mind your lesson; he must treat his—

CHER. O, ay!—He must treat his enemies with respect, his friends with indifference, and all the world with contempt; he must suffer much, and fear more; he must desire much, and hope little; in short, he must embrace his ruin, and throw himself away.

ARC. Had ever man so hopeful a pupil as mine!—Come, my dear, why is love called a riddle?

CHER. Because, being blind, he leads those that see, and, tho' a child, he governs a man.

ARC. Mighty well!—And why is Love pictured blind?

CHER. Because the painters, out of the weakness or privilege of their art, chose to hide those eyes that they could not draw.

ARC. That's my dear little scholar; kiss me again.—And why should Love, that's a child, govern a man?

CHER. Because that a child is the end of love.

ARC. And so ends Love's catechism.—And now, my dear, we'll go in and make my master's bed.

CHER. Hold, hold, Mr. Martin! You have taken a great deal of pains to instruct me, and what d'ye think I have learnt by it?

ARC. What?

CHER. That your discourse and your habit are contradictions, and it would be nonsense in me to believe you a footman any longer.

ARC. Oons, what a witch it is!

CHER. Depend upon this, sir: nothing in this garb shall ever tempt me; for, tho' I was born to servitude, I hate it. Own your condition, swear you love me, and then—

ARC. And then we shall go make the bed?

CHER. Yes.

ARC. You must know, then, that I am born a gentleman. My education was liberal, but I went to London a

younger brother, fell into the hands of sharpers, who stripped me of my money; my friends disowned me, and now my necessity brings me to what you see.

CHER. Then take my hand—promise to marry me before you sleep, and I'll make you master of two thousand pound!

ARC. How?

CHER. Two thousand pound that I have this minute in my own custody; so throw off your livery this instant, and I'll go find a parson.

ARC. What said you? A parson!

CHER. What! do you scruple?

ARC. Scruple! no, no, but—Two thousand pound, you say?

CHER. And better.

ARC. 'Sdeath, what shall I do?—But hark'e, child, what need you make me master of yourself and money, when you may have the same pleasure out of me and still keep your fortune in your hands?

CHER. Then you won't marry me?

ARC. I would marry you, but—

CHER. O sweet sir, I'm your humble servant: you're fairly caught! Would you persuade me that any gentleman who could bear the scandal of wearing a livery, would refuse two thousand pound, let the condition be what it would? No, no, sir.—But I hope you'll pardon the freedom I have taken, since it was only to inform myself of the respect that I ought to pay you.

[*Going.*]

ARC. Fairly bit, by Jupiter!—Hold! hold!—And have you actually two thousand pound?

CHER. Sir, I have my secrets as well as you. When you please to be more open I shall be more free; and be assured that I have discoveries that will match yours, be what they will. In the meanwhile, be satisfied that no discovery I make shall ever hurt you. But beware of my father! [Exit.]

ARC. So! we're like to have as many adventures in our inn as Don Quixote had in his. Let me see—two thousand pound—if the wench would promise to die when the money were spent, I gad,

one would marry her; but the fortune may go off in a year or two, and the wife may live—Lord knows how long! Then, an innkeeper's daughter! ay, that's the devil—there my pride brings me off.

For whatsoe'er the sages charge on pride,

The angels' fall, and twenty faults beside,

On earth, I'm sure, 'mong us of mortal calling,

Pride saves man oft, and woman too, from falling. [Exit.]

ACT III

SCENE I.

LADY BOUNTIFUL'S House

[Enter MRS. SULLEN and DORINDA.]

MRS. S. Ha! ha! ha! my dear sister, let me embrace thee! Now we are friends indeed, for I shall have a secret of yours as a pledge for mine. Now you'll be good for something; I shall have you conversable in the subjects of the sex.

DOR. But do you think that I am so weak as to fall in love with a fellow at first sight?

MRS. S. Pshaw! now you spoil all; why should not we be as free in our friendships as the men? I warrant you, the gentleman has got to his confidant already, has avowed his passion, toasted your health, called you ten thousand angels, has run over your lips, eyes, neck, shape, air, and everything, in a description that warms their mirth to a second enjoyment.

DOR. Your hand, sister; I an't well.

MRS. S. So—she's breeding already.—Come, child, up with it—hem a little—so—now tell me: don't you like the gentleman that we saw at church just now?

DOR. The man's well enough.

MRS. S. Well enough! Is he not a demigod, a Narcissus, a star, the man i'the moon?

DOR. O sister, I'm extremely ill!

MRS. S. Shall I send to your mother, child, for a little of her cephalic plaster to put to the soles of your feet, or shall I send to the gentleman for something for you? Come, unlace your stays; unbosom yourself. The man is perfectly a pretty fellow; I saw him when he first came into church.

DOR. I saw him too, sister, and with an air that shone, methought, like rays about his person.

MRS. S. Well said: up with it!

DOR. No forward coquette behavior, no airs to set him off, no studied looks nor artful posture—but Nature did it all—

MRS. S. Better and better!—One touch more—come!

DOR. But then his looks—did you observe his eyes?

MRS. S. Yes, yes, I did.—His eyes, well, what of his eyes?

DOR. Sprightly, but not wand'ring; they seemed to view, but never gazed on anything but me.—And then his looks so humble were, and yet so noble, that they aimed to tell me that he could with pride die at my feet, tho' he scorned slavery anywhere else.

MRS. S. The physic works purely!—How d'y'e find yourself now, my dear?

DOR. Hem! Much better, my dear.—Oh, here comes our Mercury!

[Enter SCRUB.]

Well, Scrub, what news of the gentleman?

SCR. Madam, I have brought you a packet of news.

DOR. Open it quickly, come.

SCR. In the first place, I enquired who the gentleman was; they told me he was a stranger. Secondly, I asked what the gentleman was; they answered and said that they never saw him before. Thirdly, I enquired what countryman he was; they replied 'twas more than they knew. Fourthly, I demanded whence he came; their answer was, they could not tell. And, fifthly, I asked whither he went; and they replied they knew nothing of the

matter—and this is all I could learn.

MRS. S. But what do the people say? Can't they guess?

SCR. Why, some think he's a spy, some guess he's a mountebank; some say one thing, some another: but for my own part, I believe he's a Jesuit.

DOR. A Jesuit! Why a Jesuit?

SCR. Because he keeps his horses always ready saddled, and his footman talks French.

MRS. S. His footman!

SCR. Aye, he and the count's footman were jabbering French like two intriguing ducks in a mill-pond; and I believe they talked of me, for they laughed consumedly.

DOR. What sort of livery has the footman?

SCR. Livery! Lord, madam, I took him for a captain, he's so bedizened with lace. And then he has tops to his shoes up to his mid leg, a silver-headed cane dangling at his knuckles; he carries his hands in his pockets just so—[walks in the French air]—and has a fine long periwig tied up in a bag.—Lord, madam, he's clear another sort of man than I.

MRS. S. That may easily be.—But what shall we do now, sister?

DOR. I have it.—This fellow has a world of simplicity, and some cunning; the first hides the latter by abundance.—Scrub!

SCR. Madam!

DOR. We have a great mind to know who this gentleman is, only for our satisfaction.

SCR. Yes, madam, it would be a satisfaction, no doubt.

DOR. You must go and get acquainted with his footman, and invite him hither to drink a bottle of your ale—because you're butler to-day.

SCR. Yes, madam, I am butler every Sunday.

MRS. S. O brave, sister! O' my conscience, you understand the mathematics already. 'Tis the best plot in the world: your mother, you know, will be gone to church, my spouse will be got to the ale-house with his scoun-

drels, and the house will be our own—so we drop in by accident, and ask the fellow some questions ourselves. In the country, you know, any stranger is company, and we're glad to take up with the butler in a country dance, and happy if he'll do us the favor.

SCR. Oh! madam, you wrong me! I never refused your ladyship the favor in my life.

[Enter GIPSEY.]

GIP. Ladies, dinner's upon table.

DOR. Scrub, we'll excuse your waiting—go where we ordered you.

SCR. I shall. [Exeunt.]

SCENE II.

The Inn

[Enter AIMWELL and ARCHER.]

ARC. Well, Tom, I find you're a marksman.

AIM. A marksman! who so blind could be, as not discern a swan among the ravens?

ARC. Well, but hark'ee, Aimwell!

AIM. Aimwell! call me Oroondates,¹⁸ Cesario,¹⁹ Amadis²⁰—all that romance can in a lover paint, and then I'll answer. O Archer! I read her thousands in her looks; she looked like Ceres in her harvest: corn, wine, and oil, milk and honey, gardens, groves, and purling streams played on her plenteous face.

ARC. Her face! her pocket, you mean; the corn, wine, and oil lies there. In short, she has ten thousand pound; that's the English on't.

AIM. Her eyes—

ARC. Are demi-cannons, to be sure; so I won't stand their battery.

[Going.]

AIM. Pray, excuse me; my passion must have vent.

ARC. Passion! what a plague! D'ee think these romantic airs will do our business? Were my temper as extrava-

gant as yours, my adventures have something more romantic by half.

AIM. Your adventures!

ARC. Yes. The nymph that with her twice ten hundred pounds, With brazen engine hot, and quoit²¹ clear starched, Can fire the guest in warming of the bed—

There's a touch of sublime Milton for you, and the subject but an innkeeper's daughter! I can play with a girl as an angler does with his fish; he keeps it at the end of his line, runs it up the stream and down the stream, till at last he brings it to hand, tickles the trout, and so whips it into his basket.

[Enter BONNIFACE.]

BON. Mr. Martin, as the saying is—yonder's an honest fellow below, my Lady Bountiful's butler, who begs the honor that you would go home with him and see his cellar.

ARC. Do my *baisemains*²² to the gentleman, and tell him I will do myself the honor to wait on him immediately.

[Exit BONNIFACE.]

AIM. What do I hear? Soft Orpheus play, and fair Toftida sing!

ARC. Pshaw! damn your raptures! I tell you, here's a pump going to be put into the vessel, and the ship will get into harbor, my life on't. You say there's another lady, very handsome, there?

AIM. Yes, faith.

ARC. I am in love with her already.

AIM. Can't you give me a bill upon Cherry in the meantime?

ARC. No, no, friend, all her corn, wine, and oil is ingrossed to my market. And once more I warn you to keep your anchorage clear of mine; for if you fall foul of me, by this light you shall go to the bottom! What! make prize of my little frigate, while I am upon the cruise for you!—

AIM. Well, well, I won't.

[Exit ARCHER.]

[Enter BONNIFACE.]

Landlord, have you any tolerable com-

¹⁸ hero of La Calprenède's *Cassandra*.

¹⁹ in *Twelfth Night* Viola's assumed name.

²⁰ hero of the Spanish chivalric romance.

²¹ coif.

²² respects.

pany in the house? I don't care for dining alone.

BON. Yes, sir, there's a captain below, as the saying is, that arrived about an hour ago.

AIM. Gentlemen of his coat are welcome everywhere; will you make him a compliment from me and tell him I should be glad of his company?

BON. Who shall I tell him, sir, would—

AIM. Ha! that stroke was well thrown in!—I'm only a traveller, like himself, and would be glad of his company, that's all.

BON. I obey your commands, as the saying is. *[Exit.]*

[Enter ARCHER.]

ARC. 'Sdeath! I had forgot; what title will you give yourself?

AIM. My brother's, to be sure. He would never give me anything else; so I'll make bold with his honor this bout.—You know the rest of your cue.

ARC. Aye, aye. *[Exit.]*

[Enter GIBBET.]

GIB. Sir, I'm yours.

AIM. 'Tis more than I deserve, sir, for I don't know you.

GIB. I don't wonder at that, sir, for you never saw me before—*[aside]* I hope.

AIM. And pray, sir, how came I by the honor of seeing you now?

GIB. Sir, I scorn to intrude upon any gentleman—but my landlord—

AIM. O sir, I ask your pardon! You're the captain he told me of?

GIB. At your service, sir.

AIM. What regiment, may I be so bold?

GIB. A marching regiment, sir, an old corps.

AIM. *[aside.]* Very old, if your coat be regimental.—You have served abroad, sir?

GIB. Yes, sir, in the plantations; 'twas my lot to be sent into the worst service. I would have quitted it, indeed, but a man of honor, you know—Besides, 'twas for the good of my coun-

²³ whither convicts were deported.

try that I should be abroad.—Anything for the good of one's country—I'm a Roman for that.

AIM. *[aside.]* One of the first, I'll lay my life.—You found the West Indies very hot, sir?

GIB. Aye, sir, too hot for me.

AIM. Pray, sir, han't I seen your face at Will's coffee-house?

GIB. Yes, sir, and at White's too.

AIM. And where is your company now, Captain?

GIB. They an't come yet.

AIM. Why, d'ye expect 'em here?

GIB. They'll be here to-night, sir.

AIM. Which way do they march?

GIB. Across the country. *[aside.]* The devil's in't, if I han't said enough to encourage him to declare! But I'm afraid he's not right; I must tack about.

AIM. Is your company to quarter in Litchfield?

GIB. In this house, sir.

AIM. What! all?

GIB. My company's but thin, ha! ha! ha! We are but three, ha! ha! ha!

AIM. You're merry, sir.

GIB. Aye, sir, you must excuse me, sir; I understand the world, especially the art of travelling. I don't care, sir, for answering questions directly upon the road—for I generally ride with a charge about me.

AIM. *[aside.]* Three or four, I believe.

GIB. I am credibly informed that there are highwaymen upon this quarter; not, sir, that I could suspect a gentleman of your figure—but truly, sir, I have got such a way of evasion upon the road, that I don't care for speaking truth to any man.

AIM. Your caution may be necessary.—Then I presume you're no captain?

GIB. Not I, sir; captain is a good travelling name, and so I take it. It stops a great many foolish inquiries that are generally made about gentlemen that travel; it gives a man an air of something, and makes the drawers obedient:—and thus far I am a captain, and no farther.

AIM. And pray, sir, what is your true profession?

GIB. O sir, you must excuse me!—Upon my word, sir, I don't think it safe to tell you.

AIM. Ha! ha! ha! upon my word, I commend you.

[Enter BONNIFACE.]

Well, Mr. Bonniface, what's the news?

BON. There's another gentleman below, as the saying is, that, hearing you were but two, would be glad to make the third man if you would give him leave.

AIM. What is he?

BON. A clergyman, as the saying is.

AIM. A clergyman! Is he really a clergyman? or is it only his "traveling name," as my friend the captain has it?

BON. O sir, he's a priest, and chaplain to the French officers in town.

AIM. Is he a Frenchman?

BON. Yes, sir, born at Brussels.

GIB. A Frenchman, and a priest! I won't be seen in his company, sir; I have a value for my reputation, sir.

AIM. Nay, but, Captain, since we are by ourselves.—Can he speak English, landlord?

BON. Very well, sir; you may know him, as the saying is, to be a foreigner by his accent, and that's all.

AIM. Then he has been in England before?

BON. Never, sir; but he's a master of languages, as the saying is. He talks Latin—it do's me good to hear him talk Latin.

AIM. Then you understand Latin, Mr. Bonniface?

BON. Not I, sir, as the saying is; but he talks it so very fast, that I'm sure it must be good.

AIM. Pray, desire him to walk up.

BON. Here he is, as the saying is.

[Enter FOIGARD.]

FOIG. Save you, gentlemens, both.

AIM. A Frenchman!—Sir, you most humble servant.

FOIG. Och, dear joy,²⁴ I am your

²⁴ darling; a common expression in Ireland.

most faithful shervant—and yours alsho.

GIB. Doctor, you talk very good English, but you have a mighty twang of the foreigner.

FOIG. My English is very vel for the vords, but we foreigners, you know, cannot bring our tongues about the pronunciation so soon.

AIM. [aside.] A foreigner! a downright Teague,²⁵ by this light!—Were you born in France, doctor?

FOIG. I was educated in France, but I was borned at Brussels; I am a subject of the king of Spain, joy.

GIB. What king of Spain, sir? speak!

FOIG. Upon my shoul, joy, I cannot tell you as yet.²⁶

AIM. Nay, Captain, that was too hard upon the doctor; he's a stranger.

FOIG. Oh, let him alone, dear joy; I am of a nation that is not easily put out of countenance.

AIM. Come, gentlemen, I'll end the dispute.—Here, landlord, is dinner ready?

BON. Upon the table, as the saying is.

AIM. Gentlemen—pray—that door—

FOIG. No, no, fait,²⁷ the captain must lead.

AIM. No, doctor, the church is our guide.

GIB. Aye, aye, so it is.

[Exit foremost; they follow.]

SCENE III.

A Gallery in LADY BOUNTIFUL'S House

[Enter ARCHER and SCRUB singing and hugging one another, SCRUB with a tankard in his hand, GIPSEY listening at a distance.]

SCR. *Tall, all, dall!*—Come, my dear boy, let's have that song once more.

ARC. No, no, we shall disturb the family.—But will you be sure to keep the secret?

²⁵ a familiar name for an Irishman.

²⁶ since the war of the Spanish succession was still going on.

²⁷ dial. "fait."

SCR. Pho! upon my honor, as I'm a gentleman.

ARC. 'Tis enough. You must know, then, that my master is the Lord Viscount Aimwell; he fought a duel t'other day in London, wounded his man so dangerously that he thinks fit to withdraw till he hears whether the gentleman's wounds be mortal or not. He never was in this part of England before; so he chose to retire to this place, that's all.

GIP. [*aside.*] And that's enough for me. [*Exit.*]

SCR. And where were you when your master fought?

ARC. We never know of our masters' quarrels.

SCR. No? If our masters in the country here receive a challenge, the first thing they do is to tell their wives; the wife tells the servants, the servants alarm the tenants, and in half an hour you shall have the whole county in arms.

ARC. To hinder two men from doing what they have no mind for.—But if you should chance to talk now of my business?

SCR. Talk! aye, sir, had I not learnt the knack of holding my tongue, I had never lived so long in a great family.

ARC. Aye, aye, to be sure, there are secrets in all families.

SCR. Secrets! aye—but I'll say no more. Come, sit down, we'll make an end of our tankard: here—

ARC. With all my heart; who knows but you and I may come to be better acquainted, eh? Here's your ladies' healths; you have three, I think, and to be sure there must be secrets among 'em.

SCR. Secrets! aye, friend!—I wish I had a friend!

ARC. Am not I your friend? Come, you and I will be sworn brothers.

SCR. Shall we?

ARC. From this minute. Give me a kiss—and now, brother Scrub—

SCR. And now, brother Martin, I will tell you a secret that will make your hair stand on end. You must know that I am consumedly in love.

ARC. That's a terrible secret, that's the truth on't.

SCR. That jade, Gipse, that was with us just now in the cellar, is the arrantest whore that ever wore a petticoat; and I'm dying for love of her.

ARC. Ha! ha! ha!—Are you in love with her person or her virtue, brother Scrub?

SCR. I should like virtue best, because it is more durable than beauty; for virtue holds good with some women long, and many a day after they have lost it.

ARC. —In the country, I grant ye, where no woman's virtue is lost till a bastard be found.

SCR. Aye, could I bring her to a bastard, I should have her all to myself; but I dare not put it upon that lay, for fear of being sent for a soldier. Pray, brother, how do you gentlemen in London like that same Pressing Act?

ARC. Very ill, brother Scrub; 'tis the worst that ever was made for us. Formerly I remember the good days, when we could dun our masters for our wages, and if they refused to pay us we could have a warrant to carry 'em before a justice. But now if we talk of eating, they have a warrant for us and carry us before three justices.

SCR. And to be sure we go, if we talk of eating; for the justices won't give their own servants a bad example. Now, this is my misfortune—I dare not speak in the house, while that jade Gipse dings about like a fury.—Once I had the better end of the staff.

ARC. And how comes the change now?

SCR. Why, the mother of all this mischief is a priest.

ARC. A priest!

SCR. Aye, a damned son of a whore of Babylon that came over hither to say grace to the French officers and eat up our provisions. There's not a day goes over his head without dinner or supper in this house.

ARC. How come he so familiar in the family?

SCR. Because he speaks English as if he had lived here all his life, and

tells lies as if he had been a traveller from his cradle.

ARC. And this priest, I'm afraid, has converted the affections of your Gipsy.

SCR. Converted! ayē, and perverted, my dear friend, for I'm afraid he has made her a whore and a papist! But this is not all; there's the French count and Mrs. Sullen—they're in the confederacy, and for some private ends of their own, to be sure.

ARC. A very hopeful family yours, brother Scrub! I suppose the maiden lady has her lover too?

SCR. Not that I know: she's the best on 'em, that's the truth on't. But they take care to prevent my curiosity by giving me so much business that I'm a perfect slave. What d'ye think is my place in this family?

ARC. Butler, I suppose.

SCR. Ah, Lord help you! I'll tell you. Of a Monday I drive the coach, of a Tuesday I drive the plough, on Wednesday I follow the hounds, a-Thursday I dun the tenants, on Friday I go to market, on Saturday I draw warrants, and a-Sunday I draw beer.

ARC. Ha! ha! ha! if variety be a pleasure in life, you have enough on't, my dear brother. But what ladies are those? *[Looks off stage.]*

SCR. Ours, ours; that upon the right hand is Mrs. Sullen, and the other is Mrs. Dorinda. Don't mind 'em; sit still, man.

[Enter MRS. SULLEN and DORINDA.]

MRS. S. I have heard my brother talk of my Lord Aimwell; but they say that his brother is the finer gentleman.

DOR. That's impossible, sister.

MRS. S. He's vastly rich, but very close, they say.

DOR. No matter for that; if I can creep into his heart, I'll open his breast, I warrant him. I have heard say that people may be guessed at by the behavior of their servants; I could wish we might talk to that fellow.

MRS. S. So do I, for I think he's a very pretty fellow. Come this way; I'll throw out a lure for him presently.

[They walk a turn towards the

opposite side of the stage; MRS. SULLEN drops her glove. ARCHER runs, takes it up, and gives it to her.]

ARC. *[aside.]* Corn, wine, and oil indeed!—but I think the wife has the greatest plenty of flesh and blood; she should be my choice.—Ah, ah, say you so!—Madam—your ladyship's glove.

MRS. S. O sir, I thank you!—What a handsome bow the fellow has!

DOR. Bow! Why, I have known several footmen come down from London set up here for dancing-masters and carry off the best fortunes in the country.

ARC. *[aside.]* That project, for aught I know, had been better than ours.—Brother Scrub, why don't you introduce me?

SCR. Ladies, this is the strange gentleman's servant that you see at church to-day; I understood he came from London, and so I invited him to the cellar, that he might show me the newest flourish in whetting my knives.

DOR. And I hope you have made much of him?

ARC. Oh yes, madam, but the strength of your ladyship's liquor is a little too potent for the constitution of your humble servant.

MRS. S. What, then you don't usually drink ale?

ARC. No, madam; my constant drink is tea, or a little wine and water. 'Tis prescribed me by the physician for a remedy against the spleen.

SCR. O la! O la! a footman have the spleen!

MRS. S. I thought that distemper had been only proper to people of quality.

ARC. Madam, like all other fashions it wears out, and so descends to their servants—tho' in a great many of us, I believe, it proceeds from some melancholy particles in the blood, occasioned by the stagnation of wages.

DOR. How affectedly the fellow talks!—How long, pray, have you served your present master?

ARC. Not long; my life has been mostly spent in the service of the ladies.

MRS. S. And pray, which service do you like best?

ARC. Madam, the ladies pay best; the honor of serving them is sufficient wages. There is a charm in their looks that delivers a pleasure with their commands and gives our duty the wings of inclination.

MRS. S. [*aside.*] That flight was above the pitch of a livery.—[*aloud.*] And, sir, would not you be satisfied to serve a lady again?

ARC. As a groom of the chamber, madam, but not as a footman.

MRS. S. I suppose you served as footman before?

ARC. For that reason I would not serve in that post again; for my memory is too weak for the load of messages that the ladies lay upon their servants in London. My Lady Howd'ye, the last mistress I served, called me up one morning, and told me, "Martin, go to my Lady Allnight with my humble service; tell her I was to wait on her ladyship yesterday, and left word with Mrs. Rebecca that the preliminaries of the affair she knows of are stopped till we know the concurrence of the person that I know of, for which there are circumstances wanting which we shall accommodate at the old place; but that in the meantime *there is a person about her ladyship that, from several hints and surmises, was accessory at a certain time to the disappointments that naturally attend things that to her knowledge are of more importance—"

MRS. S. } Ha! ha! ha! where are
DOR. } you going, sir?

ARC. Why, I han't half done!—The whole "howd'ye" was about half an hour long; so I happened to misplace two syllables, and was turned off and rendered incapable.

DOR. The pleasantest fellow, sister, I ever saw!—But, friend, if your master be married I presume you still serve a lady?

ARC. No, madam, I take care never to come into a married family; the commands of the master and mistress

are always so contrary that 'tis impossible to please both.

DOR. [*aside.*] There's a main point gained: my lord is not married, I find.

MRS. S. But I wonder, friend, that in so many good services you had not a better provision made for you.

ARC. I don't know how, madam. I had a lieutenancy offered me three or four times, but that is not bread, madam—I live much better as I do.

SCR. Madam, he sings rarely! I was thought to do pretty well here in the country till he came; but alack a day, I'm nothing to my brother Martin!

DOR. Does he?—Pray, sir, will you oblige us with a song?

ARC. Are you for passion or humor?

SCR. O le! he has the purest ballad about a trifle—

MRS. S. A trifle! pray, sir, let's have it.

ARC. I'm ashamed to offer you a trifle, madam; but since you command me—

[*Sings to the tune of "Sir Simon the King."* 28]

A trifling song you shall hear,
Begun with a trifle and ended.
[All trifling people draw near,
And I shall be nobly attended.

Were it not for trifles a few,
That lately have come into play;
The men would want something to do,
And the women want something to say.

What makes men trifle in dressing?
Because the ladies (they know)
Admire, by often possessing,
That eminent trifle a beau.

When the lover his moments has trifled,
The trifle of trifles to gain;
No sooner the virgin is rifled,
But a trifle shall part 'em again.

What mortal man would be able
At White's half an hour to sit?
Or who could bear a tea-table
Without talking of trifles for wit?

The court is from trifles secure;
Gold keys are no trifles, we see:
White rods are no trifles, I'm sure,
Whatever their bearers may be.

But if you will go to the place
Where trifles abundantly breed,

²⁸ first given in full in 1721 edition.

The levee will show you his Grace
Makes promises trifles indeed.

A coach with six footmen behind,
I count neither trifle nor sin:
But, ye gods! how oft do we find
A scandalous trifle within!

A flask of champagne, people think it
A trifle, or something as bad:
But if you'll contrive how to drink it,
You'll find it no trifle, egad!

A parson's a trifle at sea,
A widow's a trifle in sorrow;
A peace is a trifle to-day,
Who knows what may happen to-morrow?

A black coat a trifle may cloak,
Or to hide it the red may endeavor:
But if once the army is broke,
We shall have more trifles than ever.

The stage is a trifle, they say;
The reason, pray, carry along:
Because at ev'ry new play,
The house they with trifles so throng.

But with people's malice to trifle,
And to set us all on a foot:
The author of this is a trifle,
And his song is a trifle to boot.]

MRS. S. Very well, sir, we're obliged
to you.—Something for a pair of gloves.

[Offering him money.]

ARC. I humbly beg leave to be ex-
cused. My master, madam, pays me;
nor dare I take money from any other
hand, without injuring his honor and
disobeying his commands.

[Exit ARCHER with SCRUB.]

DOR. This is surprising! Did you
ever see so pretty a well-bred fellow?

MRS. S. The devil take him for
wearing that livery!

DOR. I fancy, sister, he may be some
gentleman, a friend of my lord's, that
his lordship has pitched upon for his
courage, fidelity, and discretion, to bear
him company in this dress and who, ten
to one, was his second too.

MRS. S. It is so, it must be so, and
it shall be so!—for I like him.

DOR. What! better than the Count?

MRS. S. The Count happened to be
the most agreeable man upon the place,
and so I chose him to serve me in my
design upon my husband. But I should
like this fellow better in a design upon
myself.

DOR. But now, sister, for an inter-
view with this lord and this gentleman;
how shall we bring that about?

MRS. S. Patience! You country
ladies give no quarter if once you be
entered. Would you prevent their de-
sires and give the fellows no wishing-
time? Look ye, Dorinda, if my Lord
Aimwell loves you or deserves you, he'll
find a way to see you, and there we
must leave it. My business comes now
upon the tapis. Have you prepared
your brother?

DOR. Yes, yes.

MRS. S. And how did he relish it?

DOR. He said little, mumbled some-
thing to himself, promised to be guided
by me—but here he comes.

[Enter SULLEN.]

SUL. What singing was that I heard
just now?

MRS. S. The singing in your head,
my dear; you complained of it all day.

SUL. You're impertinent.

MRS. S. I was ever so, since I be-
came one flesh with you.

SUL. One flesh! rather two carcasses
joined unnaturally together.

MRS. S. Or rather a living soul
coupled to a dead body.

DOR. So! This is fine encourage-
ment for me!

SUL. Yes, my wife shows you what
you must do.

MRS. S. And my husband shows you
what you must suffer.

SUL. 'Sdeath, why can't you be
silent?

MRS. S. 'Sdeath, why can't you
talk?

SUL. Do you talk to any purpose?

MRS. S. Do you think to any pur-
pose?

SUL. Sister, hark'ye—[whispers]—
I shan't be home till it be late. [Exit.]

MRS. S. What did he whisper to ye?

DOR. That he would go round the
back way, come into the closet, and
listen as I directed him. But let me
beg you once more, dear sister, to drop
this project; for as I told you before,
instead of awaking him to kindness, you
may provoke him to a rage, and then

who knows how far his brutality may carry him?

MRS. S. I'm provided to receive him, I warrant you. But here comes the count: vanish! [*Exit DORINDA.*]

[*Enter COUNT BELLAIR.*]

Don't you wonder, Monsieur le Count, that I was not at church this afternoon?

COUNT B. I more wonder, madam, that you go dere at all, or how you dare to lift those eyes to Heaven that are guilty of so much killing.

MRS. S. If Heaven, sir, has given to my eyes with the power of killing the virtue of making a cure, I hope the one may atone for the other.

COUNT B. Oh, largely, madam. Would your ladyship be as ready to apply the remedy as to give the wound? Consider, madam, I am doubly a prisoner—first to the arms of your general, then to your more conquering eyes. My first chains are easy—there a ransom may redeem me; but from your fetters I never shall get free.

MRS. S. Alas, sir! why should you complain to me of your captivity, who am in chains myself? You know, sir, that I am bound, nay, must be tied up in that particular that might give you ease. I am like you, a prisoner of war—of war indeed!—I have given my parole of honor! Would you break yours to gain your liberty?

COUNT B. Most certainly I would, were I a prisoner among the Turks. Dis is your case; you're a slave, madam—slave to the worst of Turks, a husband.

MRS. S. There lies my foible, I confess; no fortifications, no courage, conduct, nor vigilancy can pretend to defend a place where the cruelty of the governor forces the garrison to mutiny:

COUNT B. And where de besieger is resolved to die before de place. Here will I fix;—[*kneels*] with tears, vows and prayers assault your heart, and never rise till you surrender; or if I must storm—Love and St. Michael!—And so I begin the attack.

MRS. S. Stand off!—Sure he hears me not! [*aside.*] And I could almost wish he—did not! The fellow makes love very prettily.—But, sir, why should you put such a value upon my person, when you see it despised by one that knows it so much better?

COUNT B. He knows it not, tho' he possesses it; if he but knew the value of the jewel he is master of, he would always wear it next his heart and sleep with it in his arms.

MRS. S. But since he throws me unregarded from him—

COUNT B. And one that knows your value well comes by and takes you up, is it not justice?

[*Goes to lay hold on her.*]

[*Enter SULLEN with his sword drawn.*]

SUL. Hold, villain, hold!

MRS. S. [*presenting a pistol.*] Do you hold!

SUL. What! murder your husband to defend your bully!

MRS. S. Bully! For shame, Mr. Sullen. Bullies wear long swords; the gentleman has none. He's a prisoner, you know. I was aware of your outrage, and prepared this to receive your violence—and, if occasion were, to preserve myself against the force of this other gentleman.

COUNT B. O, madam, your eyes be better firearms than your pistol; they nevre miss.

SUL. What! court my wife to my face!

MRS. S. Pray, Mr. Sullen, put up; suspend your fury for a minute.

SUL. To give you time to invent an excuse!

MRS. S. I need none.

SUL. No, for I heard every syllable of your discourse.

COUNT B. Aye! and begar, I tink de dialogue was vera pretty.

MRS. S. Then I suppose, sir, you heard something of your own barbarity?

SUL. Barbarity! Oons, what does the woman call barbarity? Do I ever meddle with you?

MRS. S. No.

SUL. As for you, sir, I shall take another time.

COUNT B. Ah, begar, and so must I.

SUL. Look'e, madam, don't think that my anger proceeds from any concern I have for your honor, but for my own: and if you can contrive any way of being a whore without making me a cuckold, do it and welcome.

MRS. S. Sir, I thank you kindly; you would allow me the sin but rob me of the pleasure. No, no, I'm resolved never to venture upon the crime without the satisfaction of seeing you punished for't.

SUL. Then will you grant me this, my dear? Let anybody else do you the favor but that Frenchman, for I mortally hate his whole generation.

[Exit SULLEN.]

COUNT B. Ah, sir, that be ungrateful, for, begar, I love some of yours.—Madam—

[Approaching her.]

MRS. S. No, sir.

COUNT B. No, sir! Garzoon, madam, I am not your husband.

MRS. S. 'Tis time to undeceive you, sir. I believed your addresses to me were no more than an amusement, and I hope you will think the same of my complaisance; and to convince you that you ought, you must know that I brought you hither only to make you instrumental in setting me right with my husband, for he was planted to listen by my appointment.

COUNT B. By your appointment?

MRS. S. Certainly.

COUNT B. And so, madam, while I was telling twenty stories to part you from your husband, begar, I was bringing you together all the while?

MRS. S. I ask your pardon, sir, but I hope this will give you a taste of the virtue of the English ladies.

COUNT B. Begar, madam, your vertue be vera great, but garzoon, your honeste be vera little.

[Enter DORINDA.]

MRS. S. Nay, now you're angry, sir.

COUNT B. Angry!—*Fair Dorinda.*

[sings "Dorinda," the opera tune, and addresses to DORINDA.] Madam, when

your ladyship want a fool, send for me. *Fair Dorinda, Revenge, etc.* [Exit.]

MRS. S. There goes the true humor of his nation—resentment with good manners, and the height of anger in a song! Well, sister, you must be judge, for you have heard the trial.

DOR. And I bring in my brother guilty.

MRS. S. But I must bear the punishment. 'Tis hard, sister.

DOR. I own it; but you must have patience.

MRS. S. Patience! the cant of custom—Providence sends no evil without a remedy. Should I lie groaning under a yoke I can shake off, I were accessory to my ruin, and my patience were no better than self-murder.

DOR. But how can you shake off the yoke? Your divisions don't come within the reach of the law for a divorce.

MRS. S. Law! What law can search into the remote abyss of nature? what evidence can prove the unaccountable disaffections of wedlock? Can a jury sum up the endless aversions that are rooted in our souls, or can a bench give judgment upon antipathies?

DOR. They never pretended, sister; they never meddle but in case of uncleanness.

MRS. S. Uncleanness! O sister! casual violation is a transient injury, and may possibly be repaired; but can radical hatreds be ever reconciled? No, no, sister, nature is the first law-giver, and when she has set tempers opposite, not all the golden links of wedlock nor iron manacles of law can keep 'um fast.

Wedlock we own ordained by Heaven's decree,

But such as Heaven ordained it first to be;—

Concurring tempers in the man and wife

As mutual helps to draw the load of life.

View all the works of Providence above:

The stars with harmony and concord move.

View all the works of Providence below:
 The fire, the water, earth, and air, we know,
 All in one plant agree to make it grow.
 Must man, the chiefest work of art divine,
 Be doomed in endless discord to repine?
 No, we should injure Heaven by that surmise:
 Omnipotence is just, were man but wise.

ACT IV

SCENE I.

A Gallery in LADY BOUNTIFUL'S House

[*Enter MRS. SULLEN.*]

MRS. S. Were I born an humble Turk, where women have no soul nor property, there I must sit contented. But in England, a country whose women are its glory, must women be abused? where women rule, must women be enslaved? Nay, cheated into slavery, mocked by a promise of comfortable society into a wilderness of solitude! I dare not keep the thought about me. Oh, here comes something to divert me.

[*Enter a COUNTRY WOMAN.*]

WOM. I come, an't please your ladyship—you're my Lady Bountiful, an't ye?

MRS. S. Well, good woman, go on.

WOM. I come seventeen long mail to have a cure for my husband's sore leg.

MRS. S. Your husband! What, woman, cure your husband?

WOM. Aye, poor man, for his sore leg won't let him stir from home.

MRS. S. There, I confess, you have given me a reason. Well, good woman, I'll tell you what you must do. You must lay your husband's leg upon a table, and with a chopping-knife you must lay it open as broad as you can; then you must take out the bone and beat the flesh soundly with a rolling-

pin; then take salt, pepper, cloves, mace, and ginger, some sweet herbs, and season it very well; then roll it up like brawn, and put it into the oven for two hours.

WOM. Heavens reward your ladyship!—I have two little babies too that are piteous bad with the graips, an't please ye.

MRS. S. Put a little peper and salt in their bellies, good woman.

[*Enter LADY BOUNTIFUL.*]

—I beg your ladyship's pardon for taking your business out of your hands; I have been a-tampering here a little with one of your patients.

LADY B. Come, good woman, don't mind this mad creature; I am the person that you want, I suppose. What would you have, woman?

MRS. S. She wants something for her husband's sore leg.

LADY B. What's the matter with his leg, goody?

WOM. It come first, as one might say, with a sort of dizziness in his foot, then he had a kind of a laziness in his joints, and then his leg broke out, and then it swelled, and then it closed again, and then it broke out again, and then it festered, and then it grew better, and then it grew worse again.

MRS. S. Ha! ha! ha!

LADY B. How can you be merry with the misfortunes of other people?

MRS. S. Because my own make me sad, madam.

LADY B. The worst reason in the world, daughter; your own misfortunes should teach you to pity others.

MRS. S. But the woman's misfortunes and mine are nothing alike; her husband is sick, and mine, alas! is in health.

LADY B. What! would you wish your husband sick?

MRS. S. Not of a sore leg, of all things.

LADY B. Well, good woman, go to the pantry, get your belly-full of victuals; then I'll give you a receipt of diet-drink for your husband. But

d'ye hear, goody, you must not let your husband move too much.

WOM. No, no, madam, the poor man's inclinable enough to lie still.

[*Exit.*]

LADY B. Well, daughter Sullen, tho' you laugh, I have done miracles about the country here with my receipts.

MRS. S. Miracles indeed, if they have cured anybody; but I believe, madam, the patient's faith goes farther toward the miracle than your prescription.

LADY B. Fancy helps in some cases. But there's your husband, who has as little fancy as anybody; I brought him from death's door.

MRS. S. I suppose, madam, you made him drink plentifully of ass's milk.

[*Enter DORINDA and runs to MRS. SULLEN.*]

DOR. News, dear sister! news! news!

[*Enter ARCHER, running.*]

ARC. Where, where is my Lady Bountiful?—Pray, which is the old lady of you three?

LADY B. I am.

ARC. O madam, the fame of your ladyship's charity, goodness, benevolence, skill, and ability, have drawn me hither to implore your ladyship's help in behalf of my unfortunate master, who is this moment breathing his last.

LADY B. Your master! where is he?

ARC. At your gate, madam. Drawn by the appearance of your handsome house to view it nearer, and walking up the avenue within five paces of the court-yard, he was taken ill of a sudden with a sort of I-know-not-what; but down he fell, and there he lies.

LADY B. Here, Scrub! Gipseyl! all run, get my easy chair down stairs, put the gentleman in it, and bring him in quickly—quickly!

ARC. Heaven will reward your ladyship for this charitable act.

LADY B. Is your master used to these fits?

ARC. O yes, madam, frequently: I

have known him have five or six of a night.

LADY B. What's his name?

ARC. Lord, madam, he's a-dying! A minute's care or neglect may save or destroy his life.

LADY B. Ah, poor gentleman!—Come, friend, show me the way; I'll see him brought in myself.

[*Exit with ARCHER.*]

DOR. O sister, my heart flutters about strangely! I can hardly forbear running to his assistance.

MRS. S. And I'll lay my life he deserves your assistance more than he wants it. Did not I tell you that my lord would find a way to come at you? Love's his distemper, and you must be the physician; put on all your charms, summon all your fire into your eyes, plant the whole artillery of your looks against his breast, and down with him.

DOR. O sister! I'm but a young gunner. I shall be afraid to shoot, for fear the piece should recoil, and hurt myself.

MRS. S. Never fear: you shall see me shoot before you, if you will.

DOR. No, no, dear sister; you have missed your mark so unfortunately that I shan't care for being instructed by you.

[*Enter AIMWELL in a chair carried by ARCHER and SCRUB, LADY BOUNTIFUL, GIPSEY; AIMWELL is counterfeiting a swoon.*]

LADY B. Here, here, let's see the hartshorn-drops.—Gipseyl, a glass of fair water! His fit's very strong.—Bless me, how his hands are clinched!

ARC. For shame, ladies, what d'ye do? Why don't you help us?—Pray, madam, [*to DORINDA*]. take his hand and open it, if you can, whilst I hold his head. [*DORINDA takes his hand.*]

DOR. Poor gentleman!—Oh!—he has got my hand within his, and squeezes it unmercifully—

LADY B. 'Tis the violence of his convulsion, child.

ARC. O madam, he's perfectly possessed in these cases—he'll bite if you don't have a care.

DOR. Oh, my hand! my hand!

LADY B. What's the matter with the foolish girl? I have got this hand open, you see, with a great deal of ease.

ARC. Aye, but madam, your daughter's hand is somewhat warmer than your ladyship's, and the heat of it draws the force of the spirits that way.

MRS. S. I find, friend, you're very learned in these sorts of fits.

ARC. 'Tis no wonder, madam, for I'm often troubled with them myself; I find myself extremely ill at this minute.

[*Looking hard at MRS. SULLEN.*]

MRS. S. [*aside.*] I fancy I could find a way to cure you.

LADY B. His fit holds him very long.

ARC. Longer than usual, madam.—Pray, young lady, open his breast and give him air.

LADY B. Where did his illness take him first, pray?

ARC. To-day at church, madam.

LADY B. In what manner was he taken?

ARC. Very strangely, my lady. He was of a sudden touched with something in his eyes, which, at the first, he only felt, but could not tell whether 'twas pain or pleasure.

LADY B. Wind, nothing but wind.

ARC. By soft degrees it grew and mounted to his brain—there his fancy caught it; there formed it so beautiful, and dressed it up in such gay, pleasing colors, that his transported appetite seized the fair idea, and straight conveyed it to his heart. That hospitable seat of life sent all its sanguine spirits forth to meet, and opened all its sluicy gates to take the stranger in.

LADY B. Your master should never go without a bottle to smell to.—Oh—he recovers!—The lavender water—some feathers to burn under his nose—Hungary-water to rub his temples.—Oh, he comes to himself!—Hem a little, sir, hem.—Gipsy, bring the cordial-water.

[*AIMWELL seems to awake in amaze.*]

DOR. How d'ye, sir?

AIM. Where am I?

[*Rising.*]

Sure I have passed the gulf of silent death,

And now I land on the Elysian shore—Behold the goddess of those happy plains,

Fair Proserpine—let me adore thy bright divinity.

[*Kneels to DORINDA, and kisses her hand.*]

MRS. S. So, so, so! I knew where the fit would end!

AIM. Eurydice perhaps—

How could thy Orpheus keep his word, And not look back upon thee?

No treasure but thyself could sure have bribed him

To look one minute off thee.

LADY B. Delirious, poor gentleman!

ARC. Very delirious, madam, very delirious.

AIM. Martin's voice, I think.

ARC. Yes, my lord.—How does your lordship?

LADY B. Lord! did you mind that, girls?

AIM. Where am I?

ARC. In very good hands, sir. You were taken just now with one of your old fits, under the trees, just by this good lady's house; her ladyship had you taken in, and has miraculously brought you to yourself, as you see.

AIM. I am so confounded with shame, madam, that I can now only beg pardon—and refer my acknowledgments for your ladyship's care till an opportunity offers of making some amends. I dare be no longer troublesome.—Martin, give two guineas to the servants.

[*Going.*]

DOR. Sir, you may catch cold by going so soon into the air; you don't look, sir, as if you were perfectly recovered.

[*Here ARCHER talks to LADY BOUNTIFUL in dumb show.*]

AIM. That I shall never be, madam; my present illness is so rooted that I must expect to carry it to my grave.

MRS. S. Don't despair, sir; I have known several in your distemper shake it off with a fortnight's physic.

LADY B. Come, sir, your servant has been telling me that you're apt to relapse if you go into the air.—Your

good manners shan't get the better of ours—you shall sit down again, sir. Come, sir, we don't mind ceremonies in the country—here, sir, my service t'ye. —You shall taste my water; 'tis a cordial, I can assure you, and of my own making.—Drink it off, sir.—[AIMWELL drinks.] And how d'ye find yourself now, sir?

AIM. Somewhat better—tho' very faint still.

LADY B. Aye, aye, people are always faint after these fits.—Come, girls, you shall show the gentleman the house.—'Tis but an old family building, sir; but you had better walk about and cool by degrees, than venture immediately into the air. You'll find some tolerable pictures.—Dorinda, show the gentleman the way. [Exit.]

I must go to the poor woman below.

DOR. This way, sir.

AIM. Ladies, shall I beg leave for my servant to wait on you? for he understands pictures very well.

MRS. S. Sir, we understand originals²⁹ as well as he does pictures; so he may come along.

[Exit DORINDA, MRS. SULLEN, AIMWELL, ARCHER. AIMWELL leads DORINDA.]

[Enter FOIGARD and SCRUB, meeting.]

FOIG. Save you, Master Scrub!

SCR. Sir, I won't be saved your way—I hate a priest, I abhor the French, and I defy the devil. Sir, I'm a bold Briton, and will spill the last drop of my blood to keep out popery and slavery.

FOIG. Master Scrub, you would put me down in politics, and so I would be speaking with Mrs. Shipsey.

SCR. Good Mr. Priest, you can't speak with her; she's sick, sir; she's gone abroad, sir; she's—dead two months ago, sir.

[Enter GIPSEY.]

GIP. How now, impudence! How dare you talk so saucily to the doctor? Pray, sir, don't take it ill, for the com-

mon people of England are not so civil to strangers as—

SCR. You lie! you lie! 'tis the common people that are civilest to strangers.

GIP. Sirrah, I have a good mind to—Get you out, I say!

SCR. I won't.

GIP. You won't, sauce-box!—Pray, doctor, what is the captain's name that came to your inn last night?

SCR. The captain! ah, the devil, there she hampers me again. The captain has me on one side, and the priest on t'other; so between the gown and the sword, I have a fine time on't.—But, *Cedunt arma togæ.*³⁰ [Going.]

GIP. What, sirrah, won't you march?

SCR. No, my dear, I won't march—but I'll walk.—[aside.] And I'll make bold to listen a little too.

[Goes behind the side-scene and listens.]

GIP. Indeed, doctor, the Count has been barbarously treated, that's the truth on't.

FOIG. Ah, Mrs. Gipsesey, upon my shoul, now, gra, his complainings would mollify the marrow in your bones, and move the bowels of your commiseration! He weeps, and he dances, and he fistles, and he swears, and he laughs, and he stamps, and he sings; in conclusion, joy, he's afflicted *à la française*, and a stranger would not know whider to cry or to laugh with him.

GIP. What would you have me do, doctor?

FOIG. Noting, joy, but only hide the Count in Mrs. Sullen's closet when it is dark.

GIP. Nothing! is that nothing? It would be both a sin and a shame, doctor.

FOIG. Here is twenty louis d'ors, joy, for your shame, and I will give you an absolution for the shin.

GIP. But won't that money look like a bribe?

FOIG. Dat is according as you shall tauk it. If you receive the money beforehand, 'twill be *logique*, a bribe; but

²⁹ a play upon the old meaning of "fool."

³⁰ arms yield to the toga.

if you stay till afterwards, 'twill be only a gratification.

GIP. Well, doctor, I'll take it *logicè*.—But what must I do with my conscience, sir?

FORG. Leave dat wid me, joy; I am your priest, gra, and your conscience is under my hands.

GIP. But should I put the Count into the closet—

FORG. Vel, is dere any shin for a man's being in a closhet? One may go to prayers in a closhet.

GIP. But if the lady should come into her chamber and go to bed?

FORG. Vel, and is dere any shin in going to bed, joy?

GIP. Aye, but if the parties should meet, doctor?

FORG. Vel den—the parties must be responsible. Do you be after putting the Count in the closhet, and leave the shins wid themselves. I will come with the Count to instruct you in your chamber.

GIP. Well, doctor, your religion is so pure! Methinks I'm so easy after an absolution, and can sin afresh with so much security, that I'm resolved to die a martyr to't. Here's the key of the garden-door. Come in the back way when 'tis late; I'll be ready to receive you. But don't so much as whisper; only take hold of my hand; I'll lead you, and do you lead the Count and follow me.

[*Exeunt FOIGARD and GIPSEY.*]

[*Enter SCRUB.*]

SCR. What witchcraft, now, have these two imps of the devil been a-hatching here?—There's twenty louis d'ors; I heard that and saw the purse.—But I must give room to my betters.

[*Exit.*]

[*Enter AIMWELL, leading DORINDA, and making love in dumb show; MRS. SULLEN and ARCHER.*]

MRS. S. Pray, sir, [*to ARCHER*] how d'ye like that piece?

ARC. Oh, 'tis Leda! You find, madam, how Jupiter comes, disguised to make love—

MRS. S. But what think you there of Alexander's battles?

ARC. We want only a Le Brun, madam, to draw greater battles and a greater general of our own. The Danube, madam, would make a greater figure in a picture than the Granicus; and we have our Ramillies to match their Arbela.

MRS. S. Pray, sir, what head is that in the corner there?

ARC. O madam, 'tis poor Ovid in his exile.

MRS. S. What was he banished for?

ARC. His ambitious love, madam.—[*bowing.*] His misfortune touches me.

MRS. S. Was he successful in his amours?

ARC. There he has left us in the dark. He was too much a gentleman to tell.

MRS. S. If he were secret, I pity him.

ARC. And if he were successful, I envy him.

MRS. S. How d'ye like that Venus over the chimney?

ARC. Venus! I protest, madam, I took it for your picture; but now I look again, 'tis not handsome enough.

MRS. S. Oh, what a charm is flattery! If you would see my picture, there it is over that cabinet. How d'ye like it?

ARC. I must admire anything, madam, that has the least resemblance of you. But methinks, madam—[*he looks at the picture and MRS. SULLEN three or four times, by turns.*] Pray, madam, who drew it?

MRS. S. A famous hand, sir.

[*Here AIMWELL and DORINDA go off.*]

ARC. A famous hand, madam!—Your eyes, indeed, are featured there; but where's the sparkling moisture, shining fluid in which they swim? The picture, indeed, has your dimples; but where's the swarm of killing Cupids that should ambush there? The lips too are figured out; but where's the carnation dew, the pouting ripeness, that tempts the taste in the original?

MRS. S. [*aside.*] Had it been my

lot to have matched with such a man!

ARC. Your breasts too—presumptuous man! What, paint Heaven?—Apropos, madam, in the very next picture is Salmoneus, that was struck dead with lightning for offering to imitate Jove's thunder; I hope you served the painter so, madam?

MRS. S. Had my eyes the power of thunder, they should employ their lightning better.

ARC. There's the finest bed in that room, madam—I suppose 'tis your ladyship's bedchamber.

MRS. S. And what then, sir?

ARC. I think the quilt is the richest that ever I saw. I can't at this distance, madam, distinguish the figures of the embroidery. Will you give me leave, madam?

MRS. S. [*aside.*] The devil take his impudence!—Sure, if I gave him an opportunity, he durst not offer it!—I have a great mind to try.—[*going; returns.*] 'Sdeath, what am I doing?—And alone, too!—Sister! sister!

[*Runs out.*]

ARC. I'll follow her close—
For where a Frenchman durst attempt
to storm,

A Briton sure may well the work perform.
[*Going.*]

[*Enter SCRUB.*]

SCR. Martin! brother Martin!

ARC. O brother Scrub, I beg your pardon; I was not a-going. Here's a guinea my master ordered you.

SCR. A guinea! hi! hi! hi! a guinea! eh—by this light, it is a guinea! But I suppose you expect one and twenty shillings in change?

ARC. Not at all; I have another for Gipsej.

SCR. A guinea for her? Faggot and fire for the witch—Sir, give me that guinea and I'll discover a plot.

ARC. A plot!

SCR. Aye, sir, a plot, a horrid plot! First, it must be a plot because there's a woman in't; secondly, it must be a plot because there's a priest in't; thirdly, it must be a plot because

there's French gold in't; and fourthly, it must be a plot because I don't know what to make on't.

ARC. Nor anybody else, I'm afraid, brother Scrub.

SCR. Truly, I'm afraid so too; for where there's a priest and a woman, there's always a mystery and a riddle. This I know, that here has been the doctor with a temptation in one hand and an absolution in the other, and Gipsej has sold herself to the devil; I saw the price paid down—my eyes shall take their oath on't.

ARC. And is all this bustle about Gipsej?

SCR. That's not all; I could hear but a word here and there, but I remember they mentioned a count, a closet, a back door, and a key.

ARC. The Count!—Did you hear nothing of Mrs. Sullen?

SCR. I did hear some word that sounded that way; but whether it was Sullen or Dorinda, I could not distinguish.

ARC. You have told this matter to nobody, brother?

SCR. Told! No, sir, I thank you for that; I'm resolved never to speak one word *pro nor con* till we have a peace.

ARC. You're i' th' right, brother Scrub. Here's a treaty afoot between the Count and the lady: the priest and the chamber-maid are the plenipotentiaries.—It shall go hard but I find a way to be included in the treaty.—Where's the doctor now?

SCR. He and Gipsej are this moment devouring my lady's marmalade in the closet.

AIM. [*from without.*] Martin! Martin!

ARC. I come, sir; I come.

SCR. But you forget the other guinea, brother Martin.

ARC. Here, I give it with all my heart.

SCR. And I take it with all my soul.—

[*Exit ARCHER.*]

I'cod, I'll spoil your plotting, Mrs. Gipsej! And if you should set the captain upon me, these two guineas will buy me off. [Exit SCRUB.]

[Enter MRS. SULLEN and DORINDA, meeting.]

MRS. S. Well, sister?

DOR. And well, sister!

MRS. S. What's become of my lord?

DOR. What's become of his servant?

MRS. S. Servant! He's a prettier fellow and a finer gentleman, by fifty degrees, than his master.

DOR. O' my conscience, I fancy you could beg that fellow at the gallows-foot!

MRS. S. O' my conscience I could, provided I could put a friend of yours in his room.

DOR. You desired me, sister, to leave you when you transgressed the bounds of honor.

MRS. S. Thou dear censorious country-girl! What dost mean? You can't think of the man without the bed-fellow, I find.

DOR. I don't find anything unnatural in that thought. While the mind is conversant with flesh and blood, it must conform to the humors of the company.

MRS. S. How a little love and good company improves a woman! Why, child, you begin to live—you never spoke before.

DOR. Because I was never spoke to.—My lord has told me that I have more wit and beauty than any of my sex; and truly I begin to think the man is sincere.

MRS. S. You're in the right, Dorinda, pride is the life of a woman, and flattery is our daily bread; and she's a fool that won't believe a man there, as much as she that believes him in anything else. But I'll lay you a guinea that I had finer things said to me than you had.

DOR. Done! What did your fellow say to ye?

MRS. S. My fellow took the picture of Venus for mine.

DOR. But my lover took me for Venus herself.

MRS. S. Common cant! Had my spark called me a Venus directly, I

should have believed him a footman in good earnest.

DOR. But my lover was upon his knees to me.

MRS. S. And mine was upon his tip-toes to me.

DOR. Mine vowed to die for me.

MRS. S. Mine swore to die with me.

DOR. Mine spoke the softest moving things.

MRS. S. Mine had his moving things too.

DOR. Mine kissed my hand ten thousand times.

MRS. S. Mine has all that pleasure to come.

DOR. Mine offered marriage.

MRS. S. O Lard! D'ye call that a moving thing?

DOR. The sharpest arrow in his quiver, my dear sister! Why, my ten thousand pounds may lie brooding here this seven years, and hatch nothing at last but some ill-natured clown like yours. Whereas, if I marry my Lord Aimwell, there will be title, place, and precedence, the park, the play, and the drawing-room, splendor, equipage, noise, and flambeaux.—*Hey, my Lady Aimwell's servants!—Lights, lights to the stairs!—My Lady Aimwell's coach put forward!—Stand by, make room for her ladyship!—Are not these things moving?—What! melancholy of a sudden?*

MRS. S. Happy, happy sister! Your angel has been watchful for your happiness, whilst mine has slept regardless of his charge. Long smiling years of circling joys for you, but not one hour for me!

[Weeps.]

DOR. Come, my dear, we'll talk of something else.

MRS. S. O Dorinda! I own myself a woman, full of my sex, a gentle, generous soul, easy and yielding to soft desires—a spacious heart, where love and all his train might lodge. And must the fair apartment of my breast be made a stable for a brute to lie in?

DOR. Meaning your husband, I suppose?

MRS. S. Husband! No, even husband is too soft a name for him.—But

come, I expect my brother here to-night or to-morrow. He was abroad when my father married me; perhaps he'll find a way to make me easy.

DOR. Will you promise not to make yourself easy in the meantime with my lord's friend?

MRS. S. You mistake me, sister. It happens with us as among the men—the greatest talkers are the greatest cowards. And there's a reason for it; those spirits evaporate in prattle which might do more mischief if they took another course.—Tho', to confess the truth, I do love that fellow;—and if I met him dressed as he should be, and I undressed as I should be—look ye, sister, I have no supernatural gifts—I can't swear I could resist the temptation, tho' I can safely promise to avoid it; and that's as much as the best of us can do.

[*Exeunt MRS. SULLEN and DORINDA.*]

SCENE II.

The Inn

[*Enter AIMWELL and ARCHER laughing.*]

ARC. And the awkward kindness of the good, motherly old gentlewoman—

AIM. And the coming easiness of the young one—'Sdeath, 'tis pity to deceive her!

ARC. Nay, if you adhere to those principles, stop where you are.

AIM. I can't stop, for I love her to distraction.

ARC. 'Sdeath, if you love her a hair's breadth beyond discretion, you must go no farther.

AIM. Well, well, anything to deliver us from sauntering away our idle evenings at White's, Tom's, or Will's;³¹ and be stinted to bear looking at our old acquaintance, the cards, because our impotent pockets can't afford us a guinea for the mercenary drabs.

ARC. Or be obliged to some purse-proud coxcomb for a scandalous bottle, where we must not pretend to our share

of the discourse because we can't pay our club o'th' reckoning—Damn it, I had rather sponge upon Morris, and sup upon a dish of bohee scored behind the door!

AIM. And there expose our want of sense by talking criticisms, as we should our want of money by railing at the government.

ARC. Or be obliged to sneak into the side-box, and between both houses steal two acts of a play,³² and because we han't money to see the other three, we come away discontented and damn the whole five.

AIM. And ten thousand such rascally tricks—had we out-lived our fortunes among our acquaintance.—But now—

ARC. Aye, now is the time to prevent all this—strike while the iron is hot.—This priest is the luckiest part of our adventure; he shall marry you and pimp for me.

AIM. But I should not like a woman that can be so fond of a Frenchman.

ARC. Alas, sir! Necessity has no law. The lady may be in distress; perhaps she has a confounded husband, and her revenge may carry her farther than her love. I gad, I have so good an opinion of her, and of myself, that I begin to fancy strange things: and we must say this for the honor of our women—and, indeed, of ourselves—that they do stick to their men as they do to their *Magna Charta*. If the plot lies as I suspect, I must put on the gentleman.—But here comes the doctor—I shall be ready. [*Exit.*]

[*Enter FOIGARD.*]

FOIG. Sauve you, noble friend.

AIM. O sir, your servant! Pray, doctor, may I crave your name?

FOIG. Fat naam is upon me? My naam is Foigard, joy.

AIM. Foigard! a very good name for a clergyman. Pray, Doctor Foigard, were you ever in Ireland?

FOIG. Ireland! no, joy. Fat sort of place is dat saam Ireland? Dey say

³¹ London coffee-houses.

³² Custom permitted seeing one act without a fee.

de people are catcht dere when dey are young.

AIM. And some of 'em when they're old—as for example.—[takes FOIGARD by the shoulder.] Sir, I arrest you as a traitor against the government; you're a subject of England, and this morning showed me a commission by which you served as chaplain in the French army. This is death by our law, and your reverence must hang for't.

FOIG. Upon my shoul, noble friend, dis is strange news you tell me! Fader Foigard a subject of England! De son of a burgomaster of Brussels, a subject of England! ubooboo—

AIM. The son of a bog-trotter in Ireland! Sir, your tongue will condemn you before any bench in the kingdom.

FOIG. And is my tongue all your evidensh, joy?

AIM. That's enough.

FOIG. No, no, joy, for I will never speak English no more.

AIM. Sir, I have other evidence.—Here, Martin!

[Enter ARCHER.]

You know this fellow?

ARC. [in a brogue.] Saave you, my dear cussen! How does your health?

FOIG. Ah! [aside.] Upon my shoul dere is my countryman, and his brogue will hang mine.—*Mynheer, Ick wet neat watt hey zacht, Ick universton ewe neat, sacrament!*³³

AIM. Altering your language won't do, sir; this fellow knows your person, and will swear to your face.

FOIG. Faace! Fey, is dear a brogue upon my faash too?

ARC. Upon my soulvation dear ish, joy!—But cussen Mackshane, vil you not put a remembrance upon me?

FOIG. [aside.] Mackshane! by St. Paatrick, dat is naame, shure enough!

AIM. I fancy, Archer, you have it.

FOIG. The devil hang you, joy! By fat acquaintance are you my cussen?

ARC. Oh, de devil hang yourshelf,

³³ My lord, I know not what he says; I understand it not, on my oath.

joy! You know we were little boys togeder upon de school, and your foster moder's son was married upon my nurse's chister, joy, and so we are Irish cussens.

FOIG. De devil taak the relation! Vel, joy, and fat school was it?

ARC. I tinks it vas—aay—'twas Tipperary.

FOIG. No, no; joy; it vas Kilkenny.

AIM. That's enough for us—self-confession.—Come, sir, we must deliver you into the hands of the next magistrate.

ARC. He sends you to gaol, you're tried next assizes, and away you go swing into purgatory.

FOIG. And is it so wid you, cussen?

ARC. It vil be sho wid you, cussen, if you don't immediately confess the secret between you and Mrs. Gipsev. Look'e, sir, the gallows or the secret: take your choice.

FOIG. The gallows! Upon my shoul, I hate that saam gallow, for it is a diseash dat is fatal to our family. Vel, den, dere is nothing, shentlemens, but Mrs. Shullen would spaak wid the Count in her chamber at midnight, and dere is no harm, joy, for I am to conduct the Count to the plash, myshelf.

ARC. As I guess.—Have you communicated the matter to the Count?

FOIG. I have not sheen him since.

ARC. Right again! Why, then, doctor—you shall conduct me to the lady instead of the Count.

FOIG. Fat, my cussen to the lady! Upon my shoul, gra, dat is too much upon the brogue.

ARC. Come, come, doctor; consider we have got a rope about your neck, and if you offer to squeak, we'll stop your windpipe, most certainly. We shall have another job for you in a day or two, I hope.

AIM. Here's company coming this way; let's into my chamber, and there concert our affair farther.

ARC. Come, my dear cussen, come along. [Exeunt.]

[Enter BONNIFACE, HOUNSLOW,

and BAGSHOT at one door, GIBBET at the opposite.]

GIB. Well, gentlemen, 'tis a fine night for our enterprise.

HOUN. Dark as hell.

BAG. And blows like the devil; our landlord here has showed us the window where we must break in, and tells us the plate stands in the wainscoat cupboard in the parlor.

BON. Aye, aye, Mr. Bagshot, as the saying is, knives and forks, and cups and cans, and tumblers and tankards. There's one tankard, as the saying is, that's near upon as big as me; it was a present to the squire from his god-mother, and smells of nutmeg and toast like an East India ship.

HOUN. Then you say we must divide at the stair-head?

BON. Yes, Mr. Hounslow, as the saying is. At one end of that gallery lies my Lady Bountiful and her daughter, and at the other Mrs. Sullen. As for the squire—

GIB. He's safe enough; I have fairly entered him, and he's more than half seas over already. But such a parcel of scoundrels are got about him now that, I gad, I was ashamed to be seen in their company.

BON. 'Tis now twelve, as the saying is—gentlemen, you must set out at one.

GIB. Hounslow, do you and Bagshot see our arms fixed, and I'll come to you presently.

HOUN. } We will.
BAG. }

[*Exeunt HOUNSLOW and BAGSHOT.*]

GIB. Well, my dear Bonny, you assure me that Scrub is a coward?

BON. A chicken, as the saying is. You'll have no creature to deal with but the ladies.

GIB. And I can assure you, friend, there's a great deal of address and good manners in robbing a lady; I am the most a gentleman that way that ever travelled the road.—But, my dear Bonny, this prize will be a galleon, a Vigo business.—I warrant you, we shall bring off three or four thousand pound.

BON. In plate, jewels, and money, as the saying is, you may.

GIB. Why then, Tyburn, I defy thee! I'll get up to town, sell off my horse and arms, buy myself some pretty employment in the household, and be as snug and as honest as any courtier of 'um all.

BON. And what think you then of my daughter Cherry for a wife?

GIB. Look'ee, my dear Bonny—Cherry is the Goddess I adore, as the song goes; but it is a maxim that man and wife should never have it in their power to hang one another; for if they should, the Lord have mercy on 'um both! [*Exeunt.*]

ACT V

SCENE I.

The Inn

[*Knocking without. Enter BONNIFACE.*]

BON. Coming! Coming!—A coach and six foaming horses at this time o' night! Some great man, as the saying is, for he scorns to travel with other people.

[*Enter SIR CHARLES FREEMAN.*]

SIR. C. What, fellow! A public-house, and abed when other people sleep?

BON. Sir, I an't abed, as the saying is.

SIR C. Is Mr. Sullen's family abed, think'e?

BON. All but the squire himself, sir, as the saying is; he's in the house.

SIR C. What company has he?

BON. Why, sir, there's the constable, Mr. Gage the exciseman, the hunchbacked barber, and two or three other gentlemen.

SIR C. [*aside.*] I find my sister's letters gave me the true picture of her spouse.

[*Enter SULLEN, drunk.*]

BON. Sir, here's the squire.

SUL. The puppies left me asleep.—
Sir—

SIR C. Well, sir?

SUL. Sir, I'm an unfortunate man—I have three thousand pound a year, and I can't get a man to drink a cup of ale with me.

SIR C. That's very hard.

SUL. Aye, sir; and unless you have pity upon me and smoke one pipe with me, I must e'en go home to my wife—and I had rather go to the devil by half.

SIR C. But I presume, sir, you won't see your wife to-night; she'll be gone to bed. You don't use to lie with your wife in that pickle?

SUL. What! not lie with my wife? Why, sir, do you take me for an atheist or a rake?

SIR C. If you hate her, sir, I think you had better lie from her.

SUL. I think so too, friend. But I'm a justice of peace, and must do nothing against the law.

SIR C. Law! As I take it, Mr. Justice, nobody observes law for law's sake, only for the good of those for whom it was made.

SUL. But if the law orders me to send you to gaol, you must lie there, my friend.

SIR C. Not unless I commit a crime to deserve it.

SUL. A crime! Oons, an't I married?

SIR C. Nay, sir, if you call marriage a crime, you must disown it for a law.

SUL. Eh? I must be acquainted with you, sir.—But, sir, I should be very glad to know the truth of this matter.

SIR C. Truth, sir, is a profound sea, and few there be that dare wade deep enough to find out the bottom on't. Besides, sir, I'm afraid the line of your understanding mayn't be long enough.

SUL. Look'e, sir; I have nothing to say to your sea of truth, but if a good parcel of land can entitle a man to a little truth, I have as much as any he in the country.

BON. I never heard your worship, as the saying is, talk so much before.

SUL. Because I never met with a man that I liked before.

BON. Pray, sir, as the saying is, let me ask you one question: are not man and wife one flesh?

SIR C. You and your wife, Mr. Guts, may be one flesh, because ye are nothing else; but rational creatures have minds that must be united.

SUL. Minds!

SIR C. Aye, minds, sir; don't you think that the mind takes place of the body?

SUL. In some people.

SIR C. Then the interest of the master must be consulted before that of his servant.

SUL. Sir, you shall dine with me to-morrow!—Oons, I always thought that we were naturally one.

SIR C. Sir, I know that my two hands are naturally one, because they love one another, kiss one another, help one another in all the actions of life; but I could not say so much if they were always at cuffs.

SUL. Then 'tis plain that we are two.

SIR C. Why don't you part with her, sir?

SUL. Will you take her, sir?

SIR C. With all my heart.

SUL. You shall have her to-morrow morning, and a venison-pasty into the bargain.

SIR C. You'll let me have her fortune too?

SUL. Fortune! Why, sir, I have no quarrel at her fortune: I only hate the woman, sir, and none but the woman shall go.

SIR C. But her fortune, sir—

SUL. Can you play at whisk, sir?

SIR C. No, truly, sir.

SUL. Nor at all-fours? ²⁴

SIR C. Neither.

SUL. [*aside.*] Oons! where was this man bred?—Burn me, sir! I can't go home; 'tis but two a clock.

SIR C. For half an hour, sir, if you please—But you must consider, 'tis late.

²⁴ high-low-jack and the game.

SUL. Late! that's the reason I can't go to bed.—Come, sir! [*Exeunt.*]

[*Enter CHERRY, runs across the stage, and knocks at AIMWELL's chamber-door. Enter AIMWELL in his night-cap and gown.*]

AIM. What's the matter? You tremble, child; you're frightened.

CHER. No wonder, sir—But in short, sir, this very minute a gang of rogues are gone to rob my Lady Bountiful's house.

AIM. How!

CHER. I dogged 'em to the very door, and left 'em breaking in.

AIM. Have you alarmed anybody else with the news?

CHER. No, no, sir, I wanted to have discovered the whole plot, and twenty other things, to your man Martin; but I have searched the whole house, and can't find him. Where is he?

AIM. No matter, child; will you guide me immediately to the house?

CHER. With all my heart, sir; my Lady Bountiful is my godmother, and I love Mrs. Dorinda so well—

AIM. Dorinda! The name inspires me: the glory and the danger shall be all my own.—Come, my life,³⁵ let me but get my sword. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.

A Bed-Chamber in LADY BOUNTIFUL'S House

[*Enter MRS. SULLEN and DORINDA, undressed; a table and lights.*]

DOR. 'Tis very late, sister. No news of your spouse yet?

MRS. S. No, I'm condemned to be alone till towards four, and then perhaps I may be executed with his company.

DOR. Well, my dear, I'll leave you to your rest; you'll go directly to bed, I suppose?

MRS. S. I don't know what to do.—Hey-hoe!

DOR. That's a desiring sigh, sister.

³⁵ apostrophizing Dorinda.

MRS. S. This is a languishing hour, sister.

DOR. And might prove a critical minute if the pretty fellow were here.

MRS. S. Here! What, in my bed-chamber at two o'clock o'th' morning, I undressed, the family asleep, my hated husband abroad, and my lovely fellow at my feet!—O gad, sister!

DOR. Thoughts are free, sister, and them I allow you.—So, my dear, good night. [*Exit.*]

MRS. S. A good rest to my dear Dorinda!—Thoughts free! Are they so? Why, then, suppose him here, dressed like a youthful, gay, and burning bridegroom, [*here ARCHER steals out of the closet*] with tongue enchanting, eyes bewitching, knees imploring.—[*turns a little o' one side and see ARCHER in the posture she describes.*]
—Ah!—[*shrieks, and runs to the other side of the stage.*]
—Have my thoughts raised a spirit?—What are you, sir—a man or a devil?

ARC. A man, a man, madam [*Rising.*]

MRS. S. How shall I be sure of it?

ARC. Madam, I'll give you demonstration this minute.

[*Takes her hand.*]
MRS. S. What, sir! do you intend to be rude?

ARC. Yes, madam, if you please.

MRS. S. In the name of wonder, whence came ye?

ARC. From the skies, madam.—I'm a Jupiter in love, and you shall be my Alcmena.³⁶

MRS. S. How came you in?

ARC. I flew in at the window, madam; your cousin Cupid lent me his wings, and your sister Venus opened the casement.

MRS. S. I'm struck dumb with admiration!

ARC. And I—with wonder!

[*Looks passionately at her.*]

MRS. S. What* will become of me?

ARC. How beautiful she looks!—The teeming, jolly Spring smiles in her blooming face, and when she was con-

³⁶ whom he wooed in the form of her husband, Amphitryon.

gived her mother smelt to roses, looked
in lilies—

lilies unfold their white, their fragrant
charms,

When the warm sun thus darts into
their arms. [*Runs to her.*]

MRS. S. Ah! [*Shrieks.*]

ARC. Oons, madam, what d'ye
mean? You'll raise the house.

MRS. S. Sir, I'll wake the dead be-
fore I bear this!—What! approach me
with the freedoms of a keeper! I'm
glad on't; your impudence has cured
me.

ARC. If this be impudence [*kneels*],
leave to your partial self; no panting
pilgrim, after a tedious, painful voyage,
er bowed before his saint with more
evotion.

MRS. S. [*aside.*] Now, now, I'm
ruined if he kneels!—Rise, thou pro-
strate engineer; not all thy undermining
kill shall reach my heart.—Rise, and
now I am a woman without my sex; I
an love to all the tenderness of wishes,
sighs, and tears—but go no farther.—
till, to convince you that I'm more
than woman, I can speak my frailty,
confess my weakness even for you—
ut—

ARC. For me!

[*Going to lay hold on her.*]

MRS. S. Hold, sir! build not upon
that; for my most mortal hatred fol-
lows if you disobey what I command
ou now.—Leave me this minute.—
[*aside.*] If he denies, I'm lost.

ARC. Then you'll promise—

MRS. S. Anything, another time.

ARC. When shall I come?

MRS. S. To-morrow—when you will.

ARC. Your lips must seal the
promise.

MRS. S. Pshaw!

ARC. They must! they must! [*kisses*
her.].—Raptures and paradise!—And
why not now, my angel? The time, the
face, silence, and secrecy, all conspire.
nd the now conscious stars have pre-
dained this moment for my happiness.

[*Takes her in his arms.*]

MRS. S. You will not! cannot,
are!

ARC. If the sun rides fast, and dis-

appoints not mortals of to-morrow's
dawn, this night shall crown my joys.

MRS. S. My sex's pride assist me!

ARC. My sex's strength help me!

MRS. S. You shall kill me first!

ARC. I'll die with you.

MRS. S. Thieves! Thieves! Mur-
ther! [*Carrying her off.*]

[*Enter SCRUB in his breeches, and
one shoe.*]

SCR. Thieves! Thieves! Murther!
Popery!

ARC. Ha! the very timorous stag
will kill in rutting time.

[*Draws and offers to stab SCRUB.*]

SCR. [*kneeling.*] O pray, sir, spare
all I have, and take my life!

MRS. S. [*holding ARCHER's hand.*]
What does the fellow mean?

SCR. O madam, down upon your
knees, your marrow-bones!—he's one
of 'um.

ARC. Of whom?

SCR. One of the rogues—I beg your
pardon, sir, one of the honest gentle-
men that just now are broke into the
house.

ARC. How!

MRS. S. I hope you did not come to
rob me?

ARC. Indeed I did, madam, but I
would have taken nothing but what you
might ha' spared; but your crying
"thieves" has waked this dreaming fool,
and so he takes 'em for granted.

SCR. Granted! 'tis granted, sir; take
all we have.

MRS. S. The fellow looks as if he
were broke out of Bedlam.

SCR. Oons, madam, they're broke
into the house with fire and sword! I
saw them, heard them; they'll be here
this minute.

ARC. What, thieves?

SCR. Under favor, sir, I think so.

MRS. S. What shall we do, sir?

ARC. Madam, I wish your ladyship
a good night.

MRS. S. Will you leave me?

ARC. Leave you! Lord, madam, did
not you command me to be gone just

now, upon pain of your immortal hatred?

Mrs. S. Nay, but pray, sir—

[*Takes hold of him.*]

ARC. Ha! ha! ha! now comes my turn to be ravished.—You see now, madam, you must use men one way or other; but take this by the way, good madam, that none but a fool will give you the benefit of his courage, unless you'll take his love along with it.—How are they armed, friend?

SCR. With sword and pistol, sir.

ARC. Hush!—I see a dark lanthorn coming thro' the gallery.—Madam, be assured I will protect you, or lose my life.

Mrs. S. Your life! No, sir, they can rob me of nothing that I value half so much; therefore now, sir, let me entreat you to be gone.

ARC. No, madam, I'll consult my own safety for the sake of yours; I'll work by stratagem. Have you courage enough to stand the appearance of 'em?

Mrs. S. Yes, yes; since I have 'scaped your hands, I can face anything.

ARC. Come, hither, brother Scrub! Don't you know me?

SCR. Eh, my dear brother, let me kiss thee! [*Kisses ARCHER.*]

ARC. This way—here—

[*ARCHER and SCRUB hide behind the bed.*]

[*Enter GIBBET with a dark lanthorn in one hand and a pistol in t'other.*]

GIB. Aye, aye, this is the chamber, and the lady alone.

Mrs. S. Who are you, sir? What would you have? D'ye come to rob me?

GIB. Rob you! Alack a day, madam, I'm only a younger brother, madam; and so, madam, if you make a noise, I'll shoot you thro' the head. But don't be afraid, madam.—[*laying his lanthorn and pistol upon the table.*] These rings, madam—don't be concerned, madam, I have a profound respect for you, madam; your keys, madam—don't be frightened, madam, I'm

the most of a gentleman.—[*searching her pockets.*] This necklace, madam—I never was rude to a lady;—I have a veneration—for this necklace—

[*Here ARCHER, having come round and seized the pistols, takes GIBBET by the collar, trips up his heels, and claps the pistol to his breast.*]

ARC. Hold, profane villain, and take the reward of thy sacrilege!

GIB. Oh! pray, sir, don't kill me; I an't prepared.

ARC. How many is there of 'em, Scrub?

SCR. Five and forty, sir.

ARC. Then I must kill the villain, to have him out of the way.

GIB. Hold, hold, sir! we are but three, upon my honor.

ARC. Scrub, will you undertake to secure him?

SCR. Not I, sir; kill him, kill him!

ARC. Run to Gipseys chamber. There you'll find the doctor; bring him hither presently.—

[*Exit SCRUB, running.*]

Come, rogue, if you have a short prayer, say it.

GIB. Sir, I have no prayer at all; the government has provided a chaplain to say prayers for us on these occasions.

Mrs. S. Pray, sir, don't kill him! You fright me as much as him.

ARC. The dog shall die, madam, for being the occasion of my disappointment.—Sirrah, this moment is your last.

GIB. Sir, I'll give you two hundred pound to spare my life.

ARC. Have you no more, rascal?

GIB. Yes, sir, I can command four hundred, but I must reserve two of 'em to save my life at the sessions.

[*Enter SCRUB and FOIGARD.*]

ARC. Here, doctor, I suppose Scrub and you between you may manage him. Lay hold of him, doctor.

[*FOIGARD lays hold of GIBBET.*]

GIB. What! turned over to the priest already?—Look ye, doctor, you come before your time; I an't condemned yet. I thank ye.

FOIG. Come, my dear joy, I will secure your body and your shoul too; I will make you a good catholic, and give you an absolution.

GIB. Absolution! Can you procure me a pardon, doctor?

FOIG. No, joy.

GIB. Then you and your absolution may go to the devil!

ARC. Convey him into the cellar; there bind him—take the pistol, and if he offers to resist, shoot him thro' the head—and come back to us with all the speed you can.

SCR. Aye, aye; come, doctor, do you hold him fast, and I'll guard him.

[*Exeunt FOIGARD and GIBBET, SCRUB following.*]

MRS. S. But how came the doctor—

ARC. In short, madam—[*shrieking without.*] 'Sdeath! the rogues are at work with the other ladies—I'm vexed I parted with the pistol; but I must fly to their assistance.—Will you stay here, madam, or venture yourself with me?

MRS. S. O with you, dear sir, with you.

[*Takes him by the arm and exeunt.*]

SCENE III.

Another Apartment in the Same House

[*Enter HOUNSLOW dragging in LADY BOUNTIFUL and BAGSHOT haling in DORINDA, the rogues with swords drawn.*]

HOUN. Come, come, your jewels, mistress!

BAG. Your keys, your keys, old gentlewoman!

[*Enter AIMWELL and CHERRY.*]

AIM. Turn this way, villains! I durst engage an army in such a cause.

[*He engages them both.*]

DOR. O madam, had I but a sword to help the brave man!

LADY B. There's three or four hanging up in the hall; but they won't draw. I'll go fetch one, however. [*Exit.*]

[*Enter ARCHER and MRS. SULLEN.*]

ARC. Hold, hold, my lord! every man his bird, pray.

[*They engage man to man; the rogues are thrown and disarmed.*]

CHER. What! the rogues taken! then they'll impeach my father: I must give him timely notice. [*Runs out.*]

ARC. Shall we kill the rogues?

AIM. No, no, we'll bind them.

ARC. Aye, aye.—[*to MRS. SULLEN, who stands by him.*] Here, madam, lend me your garter.

MRS. S. The devil's in this fellow! He fights, loves, and banters, all in a breath.—Here's a cord that the rogues brought with 'em, I suppose.

ARC. Right, right, the rogue's destiny—a rope to hang himself.—Come, my lord—this is but a scandalous sort of an office, [*binding the rogues together*] if our adventures should end in this sort of hangman-work; but I hope there is something in prospect that—

[*Enter SCRUB.*]

Well, Scrub, have you secured your Tartar?

SCR. Yes, sir; I left the priest and him disputing about religion.

AIM. And pray carry these gentlemen to reap the benefit of the controversy.

[*Delivers the prisoners to SCRUB, who leads 'em out.*]

MRS. S. Pray, sister, how came my lord here?

DOR. And pray, how came the gentleman here?

MRS. S. I'll tell you the greatest piece of villainy—

[*They talk in dumb show.*]

AIM. I fancy, Archer, you have been more successful in your adventures than the house-breakers.

ARC. No matter for my adventure, yours is the principal.—Press her this minute to marry you—now while she's hurried between the palpitation of her fear and the joy of her deliverance; now while the tide of her spirits are at high-flood.—Throw yourself at her feet, speak some romantic nonsense or other

—address her like Alexander in the height of his victory, confound her senses, bear down her reason, and away with her.—The priest is now in the cellar, and dare not refuse to do the work.

[Enter LADY BOUNTIFUL.]

AIM. But how shall I get off without being observed?

ARC. You a lover, and not find a way to get off!—Let me see—

AIM. You bleed, Archer.

ARC. 'Sdeath, I'm glad on't; this wound will do the business. I'll amuse the old lady and Mrs. Sullen about dressing my wound while you carry off Dorinda.

LADY B. Gentlemen, could we understand how you would be gratified for the services—

ARC. Come, come, my lady, this is no time for compliments; I'm wounded, madam.

MRS. S. } How! wounded!

LADY B. }

DOR. I hope, sir, you have received no hurt!

AIM. None but what you may cure— [Makes love in dumb show.]

LADY B. Let me see your arm, sir—I must have some powder-sugar to stop the blood.—O me! an ugly gash, upon my word, sir: you must go into bed.

ARC. Aye, my lady, a bed would do very well.—Madam, [to MRS. SULLEN] will you do me the favor to conduct me to a chamber?

LADY B. Do, do, daughter—while I get the lint and the probe and the plaster ready.

[Runs out one way; AIMWELL carries off DORINDA another.]

ARC. Come, madam, why don't you obey your mother's commands?

MRS. S. How can you, after what is past, have the confidence to ask me?

ARC. And if you go to that, how can you, after what is past, have the confidence to deny me? Was not this blood shed in your defence and my life exposed for your protection? Look ye, madam, I'm none of your romantic fools, that fight giants and monsters for

nothing; my valor is downright Swiss. I'm a soldier of fortune, and must be paid.

MRS. S. 'Tis ungenerous in you, sir, to upbraid me with your services!

ARC. 'Tis ungenerous in you, madam, not to reward 'em.

MRS. S. How! At the expense of my honor?

ARC. Honor! Can honor consist with ingratitude? If you would deal like a woman of honor, do like a man of honor. D'ye think I would deny you in such a case?

[Enter a SERVANT.]

SERV. Madam, my lady ordered me to tell you that your brother is below at the gate. [Exit]

MRS. S. My brother? Heavens be praised!—Sir, he shall thank you for your services; he has it in his power.

ARC. Who is your brother, madam?

MRS. S. Sir Charles Freeman.—You'll excuse me, sir; I must go and receive him. [Exit]

ARC. Sir Charles Freeman! 'Sdeath and hell! my old acquaintance. No unless Aimwell has made good use of his time, all our fair machine goes sour into the sea like the Edystone.

SCENE IV.

The Gallery in the Same House

[Enter AIMWELL and DORINDA.]

DOR. Well, well, my lord, you have conquered; your late generous action will, I hope, plead for my easy yielding; tho', I must own, your lordship has a friend in the fort before.

AIM. The sweets of Hybla dwell upon her tongue!—Here, doctor—

[Enter FOIGARD, with a book.]

FOIG. Are you prepared, boat?

DOR. I'm ready. But first, my lord, one word.—I have a frightful example of a hasty marriage in my own family, when I reflect upon't, it shocks me. Pray, my lord, consider a little—

* then mercenary soldiers.

AIM. Consider! Do you doubt my honor or my love?

DOR. Neither. I do believe you equally just as brave, and were your whole sex drawn out for me to choose, should not cast a look upon the multitude if you were absent. But, my lord, in a woman; colors, concealments may hide a thousand faults in me. Therefore know me better first; I hardly dare affirm I know myself in anything except my love.

AIM. [*aside.*] Such goodness who could injure! I find myself unequal to the task of villain; she has gained my soul and made it honest like her own. I cannot, cannot hurt her. Doctor, retire. [*Exit FOIGARD.*]

Madam, behold your lover and your rosesylte, and judge of my passion by my conversion!—I'm all a lie, nor dare give a fiction to your arms; I'm all counterfeit, except my passion.

DOR. Forbid it, Heaven! A counterfeit!

AIM. I am no lord, but a poor, needy man, come with a mean, a scandalous design to prey upon your fortune. But the beauties of your mind and person have so won me from myself that, like a trusty servant, I prefer the interest of my mistress to my own.

DOR. Sure I have had the dream of some poor mariner, a sleepy image of a welcome port, and wake involved in storms!—Pray, sir, who are you?

AIM. Brother to the man whose title usurped, but stranger to his honor or his fortune.

DOR. Matchless honesty!—Once I was proud, sir, of your wealth and title, but now am prouder that you want it; now I can show my love was justly rewarded and had no aim but love.—Doctor, come in.

[*Enter FOIGARD at one door, GIPSEY at another, who whispers to DORINDA.*]

Your pardon, sir, we shannot want you now.—[*to AIMWELL.*] Sir, you must excuse me—I'll wait on you presently.

[*Exit with GIPSEY.*]

FOIG. Upon my shoul, now, dis is foolish. [*Exit.*]

AIM. Gone! And bid the priest depart!—It has an ominous look.

[*Enter ARCHER.*]

ARC. Courage, Tom!—Shall I wish you joy?

AIM. No.

ARC. Oons, man, what ha' you been doing?

AIM. O Archer! my honesty, I fear, has ruined me.

ARC. How?

AIM. I have discovered myself.

ARC. Discovered! and without my consent? What! have I embarked my small remains in the same bottom with yours, and you dispose of all without my partnership?

AIM. O Archer! I own my fault.

ARC. After conviction—'tis then too late for pardon.—You may remember, Mr. Aimwell, that you proposed this folly; as you begun, so end it. Henceforth I'll hunt my fortune single—so farewell.

AIM. Stay, my dear Archer, but a minute.

ARC. Stay? What, to be despised, exposed, and laughed at! No, I would sooner change conditions with the worst of the rogues we just now bound than bear one scornful smile from the proud knight that once I treated as my equal.

AIM. What knight?

ARC. Sir Charles Freeman, brother to the lady that I had almost—but no matter for that. 'Tis a cursed night's work, and so I leave you to make your best on't. [*Going.*]

AIM. Freeman!—One word, Archer. Still I have hopes; methought she received my confession with pleasure.

ARC. 'Sdeath! who doubts it?

AIM. She consented after to the match, and still I dare believe she will be just.

ARC. To herself, I warrant her, as you should have been.

AIM. By all my hopes she comes, and smiling comes!

[*Enter DORINDA, mighty gay.*]

DOR. Come, my dear lord—I fly with impatience to your arms—the minutes of my absence was a tedious year. Where's this tedious priest?

[Enter FOIGARD.]

ARC. Oons, a brave girl!

DOR. I suppose, my lord, this gentleman is privy to our affairs?

ARC. Yes, yes, madam, I'm to be your father.

DOR. Come, priest, do your office.

ARC. Make haste, make haste; couple 'em any way.—[takes AIMWELL'S hand.] Come, madam, I'm to give you—

DOR. My mind's altered; I won't.

ARC. Eh!

AIM. I'm confounded!

FOIG. Upon my shoul, and sho is myshelf.

ARC. What's the matter now, madam?

DOR. Look ye, sir, one generous action deserves another. This gentleman's honor obliged him to hide nothing from me; my justice engages me to conceal nothing from him. In short, sir, you are the person that you thought you counterfeited; you are the true Lord Viscount Aimwell, and I wish your lordship joy.—Now, priest, you may be gone; if my lord is pleased now with the match, let his lordship marry me in the face of the world.

AIM. } What does she mean?

ARC. }

DOR. Here's a witness for my truth.

[Enter SIR CHARLES FREEMAN and MRS. SULLEN.]

SIR C. My dear Lord Aimwell, I wish you joy.

AIM. Of what?

SIR C. Of your honor and estate. Your brother died the day before I left London, and all your friends have writ after you to Brussels; among the rest I did myself the honor.

ARC. Hark ye, sir knight, don't you banter now?

SIR C. 'Tis truth, upon my honor.

AIM. Thanks to the pregnant stars that formed this accident!

ARC. Thanks to the womb of time that brought it forth!—away with it!

AIM. Thanks to my guardian angel that led me to the prize!

[Taking DORINDA'S hand.]

ARC. And double thanks to the noble Sir Charles Freeman.—My lord I wish you joy.—My lady, I wish you joy.—I gad, Sir Freeman, you're the honestest fellow living!—'Sdeath, I'm grown strange airy upon this matter!—My lord, how d'ye?—A word, my lord, don't you remember something of a previous agreement that entitles me to the moiety of this lady's fortune, which I think, will amount to five thousand pound?

AIM. Not a penny, Archer; you would ha' cut my throat just now because I would not deceive this lady.

ARC. Aye, and I'll cut your throat again if you should deceive her now.

AIM. That's what I expected; and to end the dispute—the lady's fortune is ten thousand pound,—we'll divide stakes. Take the ten thousand pound or the lady.

DOR. How! is your lordship so indifferent?

ARC. No, no, no, madam! his lordship knows very well that I'll take the money. I leave you to his lordship, and so we're both provided for.

[Enter COUNT BELLAIR.]

COUNT B. Mesdames and Messieurs. I am your servant trice humble! I hear you be rob here.

AIM. The ladies have been in some danger, sir.

COUNT B. And, begar, our inn be rob too!

AIM. Our inn! By whom?

COUNT B. By the landlord, begar!—Garzoen, he has rob himself and run away!

ARC. Robbed himself!

COUNT B. Aye, begar, and me too of a hundred pound.

ARC. A hundred pound?

COUNT B. Yes, that I owed him.

AIM. Our money's gone, Frank.

ARC. Rot the money! my wench is

gone.—*Savez-vous quelque chose de Mademoiselle Cherry?*

[*Enter a FELLOW with a strong-box and a letter.*]

FEL. Is there one Martin here?

ARC. Aye, aye—who wants him?

FEL. I have a box here and letter for him.

ARC. [*taking the box.*] Ha! ha! ha! what's here? Legerdemain!—By this light, my lord, our money again!—But this unfolds the riddle.—[*opening the letter, reads.*] Hum, hum, hum—Oh, 'tis for the public good, and must be communicated to the company.

[*Reads.*]

Mr. Martin,

My father, being afraid of an impeachment by the rogues that are taken to-night, is gone off; but if you can procure him a pardon, he will make great discoveries that may be useful to the country. Could I have met you instead of your master to-night, I would have delivered myself into your hands, with a sum that much exceeds that in your strong box, which I have sent you, with an assurance to my dear Martin that I shall ever be his most faithful friend till death.

Cherry Boniface

There's a billet-doux for you! As for the father, I think he ought to be encouraged; and for the daughter—pray, my lord, persuade your bride to take her into her service instead of Gipsev.

AIM. I can assure you, madam, your deliverance was owing to her discovery.

DOR. Your command, my lord, will do without the obligation. I'll take care of her.

SIR C. This good company meets opportunely in favor of a design I have in behalf of my unfortunate sister. I intend to part her from her husband—gentlemen, will you assist me?

ARC. Assist you! 'Sdeath, who would not?

COUNT B. Assist! Garzoon, we all assist!

[*Enter SULLEN.*]

SUL. What's all this?—They tell me, spouse, that you had like to have been robbed.

MRS. S. Truly, spouse, I was pretty near it, had not these two gentlemen interposed.

SUL. How came these gentlemen here?

MRS. S. That's his way of returning thanks, you must know.

COUNT B. Garzoon, the question be à propos for all dat.

SIR C. You promised last night, sir, that you would deliver your lady to me this morning.

SUL. Humph!

ARC. Humph! What do you mean by humph? Sir, you shall deliver her—In short, sir, we have saved you and your family; and if you are not civil, we'll unbind the rogues, join with 'um, and set fire to your house. What does the man mean? Not part with his wife!

COUNT B. Aye, garzoon, de man no understan common justice.

MRS. S. Hold, gentlemen, all things here must move by consent; compulsion would spoil us. Let my dear and I talk the matter over, and you shall judge it between us.

SUL. Let me know first who are to be our judges.—Pray, sir, who are you?

SIR C. I am Sir Charles Freeman, come to take away your wife.

SUL. And you, good sir?

AIM. Charles,³⁸ Viscount Aimwell, come to take away your sister.

SUL. And you, pray, sir?

ARC. Francis Archer, Esq., come—

SUL. To take away my mother, I hope. Gentlemen, you're heartily welcome; I never met with three more obliging people since I was born!—And now, my dear, if you please, you shall have the first word.

ARC. And the last, for five pound!

MRS. S. Spouse!

SUL. Rib!

MRS. S. How long have we been married?

SUL. By the almanac, fourteen months; but by my account, fourteen years.

³⁸ called "Tom" before hearing of his new title.

MRS. S. 'Tis thereabout by my reckoning.

COUNT B. Garzoon, their account will agree.

MRS. S. Pray, spouse, what did you marry for?

SUL. To get an heir to my estate.

SIR C. And have you succeeded?

SUL. No.

ARC. The condition fails of his side.—Pray, madam, what did you marry for?

MRS. S. To support the weakness of my sex by the strength of his, and to enjoy the pleasures of an agreeable society.

SIR C. Are your expectations answered?

MRS. S. No.

COUNT B. A clear case, a clear case!

SIR C. What are the bars to your mutual contentment?

MRS. S. In the first place, I can't drink ale with him.

SUL. Nor can I drink tea with her.

MRS. S. I can't hunt with you.

SUL. Nor can I dance with you.

MRS. S. I hate cocking and racing.

SUL. And I abhor ombre and piquet.

MRS. S. Your silence is intolerable.

SUL. Your prating is worse.

MRS. S. Have we not been a perpetual offence to each other—a gnawing-vulture at the heart?

SUL. A frightful goblin to the sight?

MRS. S. A porcupine to the feeling?

SUL. Perpetual wormwood to the taste?

MRS. S. Is there on earth a thing we could agree in?

SUL. Yes—to part.

MRS. S. With all my heart.

SUL. Your hand. [*Offering his.*]

MRS. S. Here. [*Accepting.*]

SUL. These hands joined us, these shall part us.—Away!

MRS. S. North.

SUL. South.

MRS. S. East.

SUL. West—far as the poles asunder.

COUNT B. Begar, the ceremony be vera pretty!

SIR C. Now, Mr. Sullen, there wants

only my sister's fortune to make us easy.

SUL. Sir Charles, you love your sister, and I love her fortune; everyone to his fancy.

ARC. Then you won't refund?

SUL. Not a stiver.

ARC. Then I find, madam, you must e'en go to your prison again.

COUNT B. What is the portion?

SIR C. Ten thousand pound, sir.

COUNT B. Garzoon, I'll pay it, and she shall go home wid me.

ARC. Ha! ha! ha! French all over.—Do you know, sir, what ten thousand pound English is?

COUNT B. No, begar, not *justement*.

ARC. Why, sir, 'tis a hundred thousand livres.

COUNT B. A hundre tousand livres! A garzoon! me canno' do't; your beauties and their fortunes are both too much for me.

ARC. Then I will.—This night's adventure has proved strangely lucky to us all—for Captain Gibbet in his walk had made bold, Mr. Sullen, with your study and escriptoire, and had taken out all the writings of your estate, all the articles of marriage with [t]his lady, bills, bonds, leases, receipts, to an infinite value: I took 'em from him, and I deliver them to Sir Charles.

[*Gives him a parcel of papers and parchments.*]

SUL. How, my writings!—my head aches consumedly.—Well, gentlemen, you shall have her fortune, but I can't talk. If you have a mind, Sir Charles, to be merry, and celebrate my sister's wedding and my divorce, you may command my house—but my head aches consumedly.—Scrub, bring me a dram.

ARC. Madam, [*to MRS. SULLEN*] there's a country dance to the trifle that I sung to-day; your hand, and we'll lead it up. [*Here a dance.*]

'Twould be hard to guess which of these parties is the better pleased—the couple joined, or the couple parted; the one rejoicing in hopes of an untasted happiness, and the other in their deliverance from an experienced misery.

Both happy in their several states we
find,
Those parted by consent, and those
conjoined.
Consent, if mutual, saves the lawyer's
fee;
Consent is law enough to set you free.

[*Finis.*]

AN EPILOGUE ³⁹

*Designed to be spoke in The Beaux'
Stratagem*

If to our play your judgment can't be
kind,
Let its expiring author pity find:
Survey his mournful case with melting
eyes,
Nor let the bard be damned before he
dies.

³⁹ in Q₁ follows the prologue.

Forbear, you fair, on his last scene to
frown,
But his true exit with a plaudit crown;
Then shall the dying poet cease to fear
The dreadful knell, while your applause
he hears.
At Leuctra so the conqu'ring Theban
died,
Claimed his friends' praises, but their
tears denied:
Pleased in the pangs of death, he
greatly thought
Conquest with loss of life but cheaply
bought.
The difference this, the Greek was one
would fight,
As brave, tho' not so gay, as Sergeant
Kite;
Ye sons of Will's, what's that to those
who write?
To Thebes alone the Grecian owed his
bays;
You may the bard above the hero raise,
Since yours is greater than Athenian
praise.

CHAPTER VII

THE DRAMA OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

In the eighteenth century, theatrical conditions were not unlike those of the Restoration.

The two original patent companies—those of Drury Lane and Lincoln's Inn Fields—had experienced many vicissitudes of mutual rivalry, competition from illegitimate companies, combination, and suppression. Both were in existence in 1732, in which year the patent of Lincoln's Inn Fields was transferred to the new Covent Garden Theater. The two great rival theatrical monopolies of the remainder of the eighteenth century, then, were associated with Drury Lane and Covent Garden. Unlicensed or partly licensed theaters were, however, increasingly common. Most notable were those which successively bore the name of the Haymarket, though Goodman's Fields derives fame from its association with the youthful Garrick.

Now, as before, there were frequent revivals of older plays—Shakespeare, Beaumont and Fletcher, Dryden, Otway, and Congreve receiving such attention. Now, as before, spectacle and opera were the main rivals of the legitimate theater. Colley Cibber and others decried the popular taste for spectacle very much as Terence had done seventeen hundred years before, but the public still thronged to the performances. Opera tended to injure the drama both by displacing it and by inculcating a taste for the extravagant. Händel's operas, which were composed for the English stage (1711 and after), had, however, a positive merit which caused them to survive their century.

With regard to the conditions under which plays were produced, there is little advance to be recorded. In general, stage and theater remained the same. The proscenium portion was sometimes slightly lessened, but the late nineteenth century picture-frame stage was not yet suggested. If an actor were discovered in some lifelike attitude of sitting or reclining, he would ordinarily rise and advance to deliver his lines. Scenery still consisted mainly of flat backs and wings. One set of scenery would be used over and over again for similar settings in different plays. Advertisements stressed any scenic novelty.

The audience was boisterous and disposed on any pretext to interfere with the performance. Under William and Anne, the court interest in the theater declined, but blades and bucks still felt that a playhouse was "Liberty Hall." Playbills sometimes carried requests that spectators stay off the stage. One of Hogarth's three paintings of scenes from *The Beggar's Opera* gives graphic representation of the intimate relations between the performers and prominent or pushing auditors. With first-night audiences eager to kill a play for sport, with managers and actors capricious if not insolent and only too ready to revive an old play, aspiring dramatic authors had a difficult time. The size of the theaters, joined with the other considerations, tended to make intimate spoken drama impossible, and it is quite likely—as William Archer pointed out—that those who enjoyed the plays delighted not so much in the dialogue as in the virtuosity of the actors. The parallel case is found in modern opera—auditors delight in the singing with little or no exact comprehension of the import of the words of the songs or recitatives.

The drama of the eighteenth century, then, is the natural outgrowth of the later drama of the Restoration period. There was no great development such as occurred in the middle of the sixteenth century and in the years around 1660. Old types continued and new ones arose. The persistence of opera and spectacle has been noted. Tragedy proper settled more and more frigidly into the molds devised by the classical critics. The comedy of manners died down for a time but flared out later into the only literary drama of the century. The new types, sentimental comedy and bourgeois tragedy, yielded no plays of enduring fame, but became potent influences in the development of a great part of the later drama of England and the continent as well. The ballad opera was an innovation which became the furore for a time.

Sentimentalism was the outgrowth perhaps of a slowly formulated feeling of protest against Restoration immorality. The term *sentimentalism*—like the terms *classicism* and *romanticism*—has many implications and resists a concise definition. Basically the term refers to thinking or feeling. The new comedy of sentiment exhibited some kind of feeling—love, repentance, reform, pity, the power of example, duty to a parent, consideration of a servant—in contrast with the unthinking brutality and immorality of the older comedy of manners. With its penchant for a happy ending, sentimentalism also represented a reaction against the pseudo-classic frigidity of literary form.

By the common consent of recent critics, Colley Cibber's *Love's Last Shift* (1696) is to sentimentalism what the *Lyrical Ballads* is to English Romanticism and what *Hernani* is to the French Romantic drama. Cibber's none too admirable play helped to initiate a literary movement which has not yet ceased to influence profoundly virtually the whole body of English and American literature. Sentimentalism has become, in fact, a part of the philosophy of life of millions who would feel insulted at hearing this truth. That the modern Anglo-Saxon would not laugh at the unjust affliction of Boccaccio's or Chaucer's Griselda and would not rejoice at the success of a scoundrel like Etherege's Doramant, is a result of the vogue of sentimentalism. Like most literary revolts, however, sentimentalism established itself in an exaggerated form. The principle is not always so overdone as in *Love's Last Shift*, Steele's *Conscious Lovers* (1722), or even in such later works as the younger Dumas' *La Dame aux Camélias* (1852), a play long popular on the English stage as *Camille*.

Love's Last Shift records the desperate means resorted to by a virtuous wife to reclaim an erring husband. It is based on two concepts—that patient, tearful humility is a force for good and that beneath a sinning exterior there is a redeemable heart. The extravagance of the sentimentalism manifests itself in conversations like the following:

LOVELESS: Oh, I am confounded with my guilt, and tremble to behold thee—I have wronged you—basely wronged you—

AMANDA: One kind, one pitying look, cancels those wrongs forever.

LOVELESS: Oh, seal my pardon with thy trembling lips, while with this tender grasp of fond reviving love I seize my bliss, and stifle all thy wrongs forever.

[Embraces her.]

AMANDA: No more; I'll wash away their memory in tears of flowing joy.

LOVELESS: Oh, thou hast roused me from my deepest lethargy of vice.—Thus let me kneel and pray my thanks to her whose conquering virtue has at last subdued me. Here will I fix, thus prostrate, sigh my shame, and wash my crimes in never ceasing tears of penitence.

This scene represented something new to the world. It stood in marked contrast with the final scenes of Restoration drama in which mistresses and newly-won bride alike shared the admired male. Despite the success of *Love's Last Shift*, the genre did not triumph at once. Despite Collier's blow, the old

order of comedy died hard. *The Relapse*, *The Provoked Wife*, and *The Way of the World* all post-dated Cibber's play. In the field of sentimentalism, moreover, several sentimental plays including Steele's *The Lying Lover* (1703) did not win success. But in 1704 Cibber again achieved such a triumph with a sentimental play, *The Careless Husband*, that the *genre* became permanent in English. The principle of sentimentalism now spread rapidly to the essay, to the novel, even into philosophy itself.

Colley Cibber (1671-1757) and Richard Steele (1672-1729) are the two important writers of early sentimental comedy. Cibber's work has been sufficiently dwelt on. Steele produced three sentimental comedies in the first five years of the century, and, after seventeen years of neglect of the type, wrote a fourth play which may be taken as the culminating example of the sentimental drama of the first half of the century. *The Conscious Lovers* was produced at Drury Lane in 1722 with great success.

As he revealed himself in many of his *Tatler* papers, Steele was in character a sentimentalist, and in *The Conscious Lovers* he carried sentimentalism into the borders of the unreasonable. The plot is conventional and simple. Sir John Bevil's son, Bevil, junior, is in love with an unfortunate lady, Indiana; but his father wishes him to marry Lucinda, daughter of the old family friend, Mr. Sealand, a merchant. Young Bevil is in a delicate position, for he wishes to obey his father, to be true to his love for Indiana, and to give no offense to his friend Myrtle, whom he knows to love Lucinda. Humorous interludes are afforded by the coxcomb Cimberton's courtship of Lucinda and by the wooings of the servants, Tom and Phillis. Events are resolved happily by the discovery, through a bracelet, that Indiana is the long-lost daughter of Mr. Sealand by his first wife. All four lovers are now free to marry according to the dictates of their hearts.

The plot interest of *The Conscious Lovers* is, however, entirely subordinate to its interest as a document of reform. A great number of the *Tatler* and *Spectator* papers had been didactic; Addison and Steele had, in fact, done much to change the manners of their period. In *The Conscious Lovers* Steele was so directly a promulgator of rules and examples of conduct, that the play almost partakes of the nature of a sixteenth century "mirror." Indiana, in characterizing Bevil and herself, explains the title of the play:

As conscious honor all his actions steers,
So conscious innocence dispels my fears.

Bevil's politeness to the hired musician and, above all, his refusal to be drawn into a duel are examples offered for emulation. In the dialogue between Lucinda and Phillis, the physical manifestation of affection is relegated to servants:

LUCINDA: But I thought I heard him kiss you. Why did you suffer that?
PHILLIS: Why, madam, we vulgar take it to be a sign of love.

Mr. Sealand speaks for the new Whig mercantile class when he says:

Give me leave to say, that we merchants are a species of gentry that have grown into the world this last century, and are as honorable and almost as useful as you landed folks that have always thought yourselves so much above us.

The author's purpose is summed up in the prologue:

Fain would he give more just applauses rise,
And please by wit that scorns the aid of vice.

There is also an exhortation to Britons:

No more let ribaldry, with licence writ,
Usurp the name of eloquence or wit. . . .
'Tis yours with breeding to refine the age,
To chasten wit, and moralize the stage.
Ye modest, wise, and good, ye fair, ye brave,
To-night the champion of your virtues save;
Redeem from long contempt the comic name,
And judge politely for your country's fame.

It is now necessary to turn slightly backward in time and notice the developments in tragedy in the first part of the eighteenth century. Tragedy since the Restoration had not been as close to the English people as comedy. Dryden's criticism and example and the general English respect for Corneille and Racine (as later, the respect for Voltaire) did much to uphold the pseudo-classic tradition. On the other hand, no tragic dramatist of the century was as popular as Shakespeare. Because of the limitations of the classic rules, because Shakespeare loomed above successful imitation, or for other cause, tragedy in the eighteenth century amounted to almost nothing. Remembered names in the first few decades include Ambrose Phillips (1671-1749), author of *The Distressed Mother* (1712), James Thomson (1700-1748), author of *Sophonisba* (1730), Joseph Addison, and Nicholas Rowe. The latter two require comment.

Perhaps the most important tragedy of the early eighteenth century was Addison's *Cato* (1713). Joseph Addison (1672-1719)—classicist by native taste and by education—selected a plot from Plutarch, observed all three unities; constructed in fact a wholly "correct" work. *Cato* held the stage for the record run up to its time; but its success, one can well believe, was due less to its merits as a stage play than to its maxims of political morality which both Tories and Whigs sought by applause to arrogate to themselves.

Cato is a stately but frigid blank verse portrayal of the last hours and suicide of the younger Cato, who at Utica, 46 B.C., preferred to die rather than submit to Cæsar. Not even the love affairs of Portius and Lucia and of Juba and Marcia infuse any warmth into the plot. The play survives, hardly living drama, but a splendid monument at once to Addison's cultured versatility and to the respect which the classic tragedy inspired in England under Queen Anne.

Sharing with Addison the field of English tragedy in the first fifteen years of the century was the more prolific playwright, the variously famous, Nicholas Rowe (1674-1718). Rowe, a gentleman and scholar and later the successor of Shadwell as Poet Laureate, forsook law for the drama and began by writing sentimentalized tragedies of great stage success. He is remembered now, however, for his scholarly work on Shakespeare (of which more presently); and his later dramas are professedly imitative of the great Elizabethan. In *Lady Jane Gray* (1715), the resemblance is general rather than specific; but in the better remembered *The Tragedy of Jane Shore, Written in Imitation of Shakespeare's Style* (1714), Rowe used the subject-matter of *Richard III*. Differences in handling are manifold. Rowe, scholar that he was, made some effort to preserve the unities; whereas Shakespeare's play was limited in no such way. Rowe, similarly, greatly reduced the number of characters. He changed, moreover, the focus of attention. Thinking Shakespeare's delineation of masculine character unsurpassed but his delineation of feminine character weak, Rowe announced his own devotion to "she tragedies"—in an effort to produce plays complementary to those of his great predecessor. In *Jane Shore*, as the title indicates, affairs of state yield place to the sufferings of the repentant heroine, the unhappy mistress of the late king, Edward IV. And the purpose is entirely moral. Of *Cato*, no less a personage than Pope had written in the "Prologue":

Our author shuns by vulgar springs to move
The hero's glory, or the virgin's love.

Rowe went even further—as Steele was soon to do in the already discussed *Conscious Lovers*—and stated a direct purpose. Bellmour says, in the concluding speech of the play:

Let those who view this sad example know
What fate attends the broken marriage vow;
And teach their children in succeeding times,
No common vengeance waits upon these crimes,
When such severe repentance could not save,
From want, from shame, and an untimely grave.

Although *Jane Shore* has no outstanding intrinsic worth it is remembered for several reasons. It is by the historically important Rowe. It ran for nineteen performances when originally presented at Drury Lane. It shows a marked advance over *Cato*, produced the year before, in the direction of indigenous tragedy. Pope, in his prologue to *Cato*, had said:

Our scene precariously subsists too long
On French translation, and Italian song.
Dare to have sense, yourselves, assert the stage;
Be justly warmed with your own native rage.

More certainly than Addison, Rowe did what Pope advised, for he took his subject from English history. Sir Thomas More's life of Richard III, the ballad "Jane Shore," Thomas Heywood's *Edward IV*, and various other historical or literary works had referred to Mistress Shore. The parallel between Rowe and Shakespeare will prove interesting. Though phrases from various plays are found here and there, the similarity is especially striking in the scenes in which Gloster accuses Mistress Shore of blasting his arm by witchcraft. Gloster's exit line is the same in *Jane Shore* (IV, i, 252) and in *Richard III* (III, iv, 81):

The rest that love me, rise and follow me,

and the passages leading to it have much similarity.

But Rowe's greatest claim to fame is not his dramatic work imitative—in a certain degree—of Shakespeare, but his biographical, critical, editorial work on the great dramatist. Shakespeare, as has been shown, was popular in the Restoration period—despite the accepted dictum that he lacked art and despite the fact that Dryden and others felt impelled to "improve" his plays by rewriting them. By the Restoration worthies, the comedies were generally neglected in favor of the tragedies; and at the beginning of the eighteenth century, many of the latter were regular stock pieces of the two theaters. Shakespeare's sustained and increasing fame resulted in—as it was subsequently furthered by—Rowe's famous edition of the plays (8 volumes, 1709-14). He rendered an important service to readers in listing the *dramatis personæ*, dividing the plays into acts and scenes, and noting exits and entrances. With the help of Betterton, he collected the surviving facts and the traditions for the first life of Shakespeare. The value of his pioneering is recognized by posterity; it was recognized also by contemporaries and more immediate successors who paid Rowe the compliment of imitation. Pope soon (1723-25) got into print his edition of Shakespeare. The third editor (1733) was the scholarly Lewis Theobald (1688-1744), whose edition is famous for its early and often brilliant conjectural restorations of corrupt passages. Samuel Johnson's edition (1765) was one of a half-dozen others in the remainder of the century.

Mention has been made of the element of music in English dramatic productions. As far back as *Gorboduc* several kinds of instruments were used in the *entr'acte* pantomimes. Even the best Elizabethan dramas had their songs, dances, and processions. The development of the masque has been noted. It was not, however, until after the Restoration that opera, as we know it today, came to be an important stage type. Relying mainly on spectacle, extravaganza, and music, the opera left no impress on literature. The Restoration product was succeeded in the earlier years of the eighteenth century by the Italian opera. The first work to foreshadow the type was the *Arsinoe* produced successfully at Drury Lane in 1705. Despite the hostility of Dennis, Cibber, and other critics; despite Addison's offering as a substitute his *Rosamond* (1707), an English opera "after the Italian manner," the Italian opera soon won the field. George Frederick Händel achieved great success with *Rinaldo* in 1711, and the innovation with its arias and recitatives was at home on the English stage. Not Henry Carey, reputed author of "God Save the King," not even John Gay could produce an acceptable English substitute.

The history of surviving English opera of the eighteenth century is centered not around grand opera but—for the most part—around a single ballad opera. In 1728 there appeared a burlesque which became a classic. The *Don Quixote* of Miguel de Cervantes is the standard example, but the achievement of Gay is little less remarkable.

The Beggar's Opera by John Gay (1685-1732) was produced by John Rich at Lincoln's Inn Fields in January, 1728. This ballad opera had an initial run of sixty-two performances—an unprecedented number at the time. It became the rage in London society. Its music was published and was widely sung. Fans, screens, and the like appeared with scenes and words from this success of the season. Hogarth painted the ensemble and made a portrait of Miss Lavinia Fenton, the lady who created the leading feminine rôle. Miss Fenton was the subject of fictitious biographies, and was loved and later married by the Duke of Bolton. The success of the piece, in the words of a wit of the time, made Rich gay and Gay rich. Imitations—sincerest of flatterers—appeared promptly—*The Quaker's Opera* by Thomas Walker in 1728, and Charles Johnson's *The Village Opera* and Cibber's *Love in a Riddle* the next year. The type, however, was short-lived.

The story of *The Beggar's Opera*—the original and only notable representative of its *genre*—is trivial enough. Polly, the heroine of the supposed beggar-author, is the daughter of a couple who deal in stolen goods and is a sweetheart of Captain Macheath, a noted highwayman. Polly's parents are as dishonorable as possible; Macheath is a man of a dozen mistresses; and the background is peopled with characters of similar depravity. The book is not primarily realistic, however, but scathingly satiric; the rogues are seen to be high-placed gentlemen and ladies, divested of certain exterior trappings. Much of Gay's satire is still pertinent today. Since a burlesque can never again be as pointed as to the *au courant* audiences of its first run, it may not be amiss to state that Macheath is a caricature of Sir Robert Walpole. When the Whig minister saw the opera, he had the good sense to divert suspicion "by applauding with fine unconcern"; but he banned Gay's sequel, *Polly*, and later, to prevent similar satires, secured the passage of the repressing Licensing Act of 1737.

The secret of the original success and the enduring vitality of *The Beggar's Opera* lies not in the literary or even in the satiric merit of the book, but in the preserved snatches of balladry and in the tunes of the old ballads. These brief but catchy airs have given the language such sentiments as "How happy I could be with either, Were t'other dear charmer away." They held the play on the stage for a hundred and fifty years. *The Beggar's Opera* then receded from

sight for some decades, its author being remembered for *The Shepherd's Week* and the *Fables*. In 1919, however, Nigel Playfair revived the old ballad opera at the Lyric Theater, Hammersmith (London), where it had a remarkably long run. A revival was successful in New York also. *The Beggar's Opera*, in fine, may be said to have forced its way recently into the restricted list of living eighteenth century dramas—a list which had previously contained but three titles—*She Stoops to Conquer*, *The Rivals*, and *The School for Scandal*.

Now that the comedy, the tragedy, and the opera of the first three decades of the century have been examined, it is necessary to advance somewhat and survey the drama between 1730 and the rise of Goldsmith and Sheridan. The wave of national dramatic genius which culminated in Shakespeare, was receding before 1642, and—as far as permanent literary value is concerned—may be said to have subsided entirely by 1730. The plays of Congreve, Farquhar Addison, Steele, Rowe, Gay, and even Cibber of the period before 1730, and those of Goldsmith and Sheridan of the period after 1765 are in intrinsic importance superior to those produced between the above dates, even by Lillo, Fielding, and Dr. Johnson. Nevertheless, the drama of the middle of the century has interest enough—*per se* or in the light of the future—for consideration without apologies.

In the mid-century, opera, pantomime, farce, and burlesque enjoyed their usual popularity. Italian opera survived the decline of the ballad-operas. Rich, who had staged *The Beggar's Opera*, produced many pantomimes, striving to make each more spectacular than its predecessor. Even Garrick catered to the popular taste with such offerings as "A New grand Entertainment of Dancing called *The Chinese Festival*" (1755). Fielding's *The Letter-Writers* (1731) may serve to represent eighteenth century farce, a persistent type, with ephemeral examples. The demand for afterpieces tended also to produce shorter farces, not unlike the drolls, the brief humorous plays given by strollers during the Puritan interregnum. Fielding also succeeded Gay as a successful author of burlesque—a too successful one, for he inspired the Licensing Act of 1737. But the Licensing Act was a disguised blessing for Fielding; it was instrumental in making a third-rate dramatist into one of the world's greatest novelists. *Tom Thumb*, a burlesque in the manner of *The Rehearsal*, is Fielding's best-known play. It parodies hundreds of speeches from plays of a heroic type, particularly those of Nat Lee and—above all—Dryden.

Deserving more notice than opera, pantomime, farce, and burlesque are five subjects which will be taken up in order: Lillo and bourgeois tragedy; Home's *Douglas* and the Romantic drama; tragedy; comedy; David Garrick and other players.

Sentiment in the theater was now found most notably in a *genre* commonly called "bourgeois tragedy." The leading writer was George Lillo (1693-1739). Lillo, a London merchant himself, wrote in *The London Merchant: or, The History of George Barnwell* (1731), a play which outdid Steele's *The Conscious Lovers* and even Dekker's *The Shoemakers' Holiday* in glorifying trade. The author had earlier written a ballad opera and again showed his interest in balladry by basing *The London Merchant* on the old "Ballad of George Barnwell." Despite the seeming lack of sufficient motivation for the murder, and despite an unforgivably maudlin fifth act, the play has real dramatic merit. *The London Merchant* exhibits the success of a good apprentice who is faithful to his duty and the ruin of a thoughtless apprentice who allows himself to be victimized by a courtesan. It is interesting to note that the Barnwell of the ballad was an unmitigated rascal; with the advance of sentimentalism, however,

he is, in the hands of Lillo, portrayed as more sinned against than sinning. The play had a good run when originally produced at Drury Lane, and as a stock piece and in book form continued long in favor. For many years it was given at Easter and Christmas with admission free to apprentices. A second important domestic tragedy by Lillo is *Fatal Curiosity, A True Tragedy* (Haymarket Theater, 1736). Similar in type to the domestic tragedies of Lillo is *The Gamester* (1753), by Edward Moore (1712-1757).

The London Merchant is as good as any play between *The Beggar's Opera* and *She Stoops to Conquer*, but its chief importance is not intrinsic. Middle-class urban life had been successfully dramatized as far back as the time of Dekker, and sentiment was in 1731 the property of all who wrote. Lillo's play, however, in its emphasis on conduct seems more akin to Pinero's *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray* or to *The Thunderbolt* than to antecedent drama. In *The London Merchant* there is, in fact, the germ of the modern serious drama, social drama, or drama of ideas—as it is variously called. As Professor Nicoll has pointed out, Lillo is a distant but direct ancestor of Ibsen and the Ibsen school.

English drama from the age of Elizabeth had been almost invariably associated with London, but Scotland in the middle of the eighteenth century saw the production of one play which deserves remembrance. John Home (1722-1808) offered his blank verse tragedy, *Douglas*, to Garrick. The great actor refused it and the author had it produced in Edinburgh (1756). Here the play was a great success, less one would surmise from its merit than from its appeal through certain exaggerated characteristics of Romanticism—a movement then beginning to gather headway. The speech beginning

My name is Norval: on the Grampian Hills
My father feeds his flocks. . . .

was long one of the most popular declamations in the English language. The Edinburgh success of *Douglas* was followed by success in London, and for a score of years Home's plays enjoyed considerable vogue. *Douglas* is important as a connecting link between the older tragedy and the Romantic poetic drama of the nineteenth century. The chance production of his play in Edinburgh should also be stressed. Provincial towns—notably Dublin—had often imported a London success, but so far not one had seen the première of a notable original play. *Douglas* may then in a sense be regarded as a remote, unconscious harbinger of the twentieth century effort at decentralizing the drama.

In the mid-century, tragedy was at a low ebb. Home's *Douglas* has been noted. The author of *The Seasons*, James Thomson, tried his hand at classical tragedy and produced a number of now forgotten pieces. It is scarcely too much to say that he is remembered as a playwright chiefly by the burlesques of his line:

Oh! Sophonisba; Sophonisba, Oh!

one of which reads:

Oh! Jemmy Thomson; Jemmy Thomson, Oh!

Perhaps the only living relic of his dramatic work is the poem, "Rule Britannia," which appeared in 1740 in *The Masque of Alfred*, a work of composite authorship. Aaron Hill (1685-1750) adapted a number of Voltaire's tragedies. William Whitehead (1715-1785) was successful with the *Roman Father* (1750), an adaptation of Racine's *Horace*. The plays of Edward Young and William

Mason belong to literature rather than to drama; as does Dr. Johnson's *Irene* (1749), which not even Garrick could make a success. Along with the rest of the classic tragedy of the century, *Irene* fails, under the criticism of its own author:

Then crush'd by Rules, and weaken'd as refin'd,
For years the Pow'r of Tragedy declin'd;
From Bard to Bard, the frigid caution crept,
Till Declamation roar'd, while Passion slept.

True tragedy for an indefinite period was to be confined to revivals—chiefly of Shakespeare.

Comedy about the middle of the century reached an even lower ebb than tragedy. Garrick made a success of *The Suspicious Husband* (1747) by Dr. Benjamin Hoadly (1706-1757), but in general any talent for lighter dramatic writing went into the pantomimes, burlesques, and farces. On the other hand, the age was addicted to revivals, and many of the best comedies of previous years were produced. Shakespeare's comedies had been long unacted, but the general advance of his fame and the vogue of revivals led to the production of a number of them in the late seventeen-thirties. In the single season of 1740-41, *As You Like It*, *Twelfth Night*, and *The Merchant of Venice* were presented at Drury Lane.

The eighteenth century has been fittingly described as an age less of playwrights than of actors. Attention must now be given to David Garrick (1716-1779)—a man who was certainly the dominant theatrical figure of his century, and was perhaps the greatest actor yet produced by the English-speaking world. Garrick's early connection with Johnson and his turning from the wine trade to the stage are well known—as are most details of his amazing career.

After trying his hand at a play or two, Garrick got his chance to act. Refused admission to the Drury Lane and Covent Garden companies, he made his début at the unlicensed theater in Goodman's Fields. Here to evade the obvious infringement of the rights of the patent theaters, there was offered for October 19, 1741, "a concert of vocal and instrumental music." But the notice continued: "N.B. Between the two parts of the concert will be presented an Historical play called the Life and Death of King Richard the Third." On the program of the play thus pseudo-surreptitiously offered, Garrick's name did not appear, but his success was instantaneous and overwhelming. With him came a new age of more realistic, more vital acting. The next year Garrick joined the Drury Lane company. He became a lion; people went to the theater not to see the work of a certain dramatist but to see Garrick act.

The weight of Garrick's powerful personality was never thrown definitely in any direction. He acted in comic as well as tragic rôles; played in the new plays; but showed a great fondness for the older successes. He produced some twenty of the plays of Shakespeare. He was not averse to a rearrangement which he considered more effective theatrically—he played, for instance, the Cibber version of *Richard III* which is still used in the twentieth century—but in general he followed the trend toward restoring the text of Shakespeare. No effort at period costuming was undertaken. In the light of the excitement caused by Sir Barry Jackson's 1925 performance of *Hamlet* in 1925 costume in London and by Mr. Horace Liveright's similar New York production, it is interesting to note that Garrick played Shakespeare in the costumes of the Hanoverian court. He wore for the part of Othello the uniform of a British general; for Hamlet, the costume of an eighteenth century clergyman. Garrick bought the patent of Drury Lane in 1747 and became manager as well as actor. His

activities extended to 1776, the year in which he sold out to a group headed by Sheridan.

David Garrick towered over his contemporaries in the eighteenth century; but there were many other great players in a century so famous in acting. The illustrious aging Betterton dominated the first decade. The triumvirate of Drury Lane—Barton Booth, Robert Wilks, and Colley Cibber—were the leaders for the next two decades. In the thirties Cibber was rivaled by James Quin. Among Garrick's contemporaries, Charles Macklin came nearest to being a rival. In the first half of the century the first place among actresses may be said to have been held successively by Mrs. Bracegirdle, Mrs. Oldfield, and Peg Woffington. Of note also was Susannah Maria Cibber, daughter-in-law of the playwright, manager, and theatrical apologist, Colley Cibber. Soon after the close (1776) of the Garrick era, primacy in acting was assumed for the remainder of the century by John Philip Kemble and his sister, Sarah. Kemble was in many ways an influence in the theater, and his sister, as Mrs. Siddons, enjoyed the highest fame.

Preceding paragraphs have carried the history of the English theater to about 1760. The next twenty years are noted for the rise of comedy with the great names of Goldsmith and Sheridan, for the struggle between true and sentimental comedy with the triumph of the latter, and for the activities of the great managers, Sheridan and Garrick.

Of the minor, but still remembered comedy writers of the period, mention must be made of four—Foote, Colman, Kelly, and Cumberland. Of this quartet the first two were exponents of the regular; the last two, of the sentimental comedy.

Samuel Foote (1720-1777), though he began his theatrical activities in the forties, is best remembered for his later work, particularly such of it as stood in some relation to the writings or the career of his younger contemporary, Richard Brinsley Sheridan. *The Minor* (1760) contains several characters which seem to be the originals of similar characters in *The School for Scandal*. The title character of *The Maid of Bath* (1771) was none other than Elizabeth Linley, the wife of Sheridan. Through his friendship with the Duke of York, Foote received a license (1766) to operate a summer theater, the *Little Haymarket*. This theater had been opened in 1720 and had seen much of the dramatic work of Fielding. Foote remodeled it and operated it from 1767 until, shortly before his death in 1777, he sold out to Colman. Foote was a satirist who directed his shafts against individuals rather than types. He wrote some lively farces. His work was in general anti-sentimental and his successful puppet-show, *The Handsome Housemaid or Piety in Pattens* (1773), was a specific burlesque of sentimental drama.

George Colman (1732-1794), playwright and manager, shared with Foote the honor of being in some respects a forerunner of Goldsmith and Sheridan. His first play, *Polly Honeycombe* (1760), has the spirit not of the sentimental but of the regular comedy, and refers to the sentimental novel and the circulating library quite in the manner of *The Rivals*. Another notable comedy was *The Clandestine Marriage* (1766), a play inspired by one of Hogarth's drawings. An adaptation (1763) of the *Philaster* of Beaumont and Fletcher was successful. Quite the most interesting of Colman's plays, however, is *The Jealous Wife*, a "regular" comedy, which achieves the importance and distinction of being a successful stage version of the great eighteenth century novel, Fielding's *Tom Jones*.

Hugh Kelly (1739-1777) wrote several plays as well as various other compositions, but his claim to a place in a brief history of the drama rests principally

on his *False Delicacy* (1768). This play—though it included non-sentimental elements—achieved a theatrical triumph not only for itself, but for the sentimental type. It abounded in aphorisms which stated in a memorable way the philosophy of the sentimental drama. Parson Adams in Fielding's *Joseph Andrews* observed that he had "never heard of any plays fit for a Christian to read but *Cato* and *The Conscious Lovers*," and he considered that the latter contained "some things almost solemn enough for a sermon." With Kelly the stage was the place for a sermon. In the words of one of his characters he specifically said, "The stage should be a school of morality."

Richard Cumberland (1732-1811) was a prolific producer of plays throughout most of a long career. He belongs in time to the age of Wordsworth as well as to the age of Johnson; but is remembered best, perhaps, for his two sentimental plays, *The West Indian* (1771) and *The Fashionable Lover* (1772). The titular hero of *The West Indian*, a returned colonial, was a forerunner of a large number of similar characters in Romantic and later literature.

Into competition with the writers of sentimental comedy, there came in 1768 the versatile Goldsmith. Oliver Goldsmith (1728-1774), the son of a clergyman who held various Irish livings, was in 1745 entered as a student in Trinity College, Dublin. Later he planned to emigrate to America, and got as far as the seaport town of Cork. Sustained, for the most part, on money furnished by his uncle Contarine, he studied law at Edinburgh and medicine at Leyden; but he failed to put into practice such professional education as he may have acquired. He left Leyden for extended ramblings on the continent and—after a short experience as a school-master—turned up in London, penniless, in 1756. To give himself the prestige for a medical appointment, Goldsmith wrote *An Inquiry into the Present State of Polite Learning in Europe* (1759). This work proved the starting point of his career—not as a scientist but as a writer. He was shortly asked to write the essays for *The Bee* (1759), one of the numerous eighteenth century imitations of *The Spectator*. *The Bee* was not a success, and Goldsmith wrote for Newbery's *Public Ledger* a still-read series of essays under the heading, *The Citizen of the World* (1762). In 1761, Goldsmith met Johnson and was soon elected to the famous Club of which Johnson, Garrick, Reynolds, Burke, and Gibbon were members. *The Traveller* appeared in 1764, and in the remaining ten years of his life, Goldsmith produced a variety of work which gives him claim, perhaps, with Dryden only, to the title of great writer, rather than great poet, great essayist, great dramatist, or the like. His essays, plays, poems, and novel are all read in the twentieth century. *The Vicar of Wakefield* was published in 1766; *The Deserted Village*, in 1770. After Goldsmith's death there appeared the unfinished "Retaliation," a poem in which he had happily revenged himself on members of the Club, who had made him the subject of comic epitaphs. Still remembered is Garrick's obituary couplet:

Here lies Nolly Goldsmith, for shortness called Noll,
Who wrote like an angel, but talked like poor Poll.

Goldsmith's plays were but two, *The Good-Natured Man* (1768) and *She Stoops to Conquer* (1773). Though evidences of the author's unpracticed hand are visible, the first ranks high among the plays of its time. The latter is one of the comic masterpieces of the language, vitally alive today not only in the library but on the stage.

The Good-Natured Man was offered to Garrick, manager of Drury Lane, was held unduly long, and was finally rejected. It was then offered to Colman,

who accepted it for Covent Garden. Meanwhile Garrick had rushed the production of Kelly's *False Delicacy*, which reached the boards six days before *The Good-Natured Man*. Though Goldsmith made the tidy sum of five hundred pounds from the nine-nights' run and the sale of the copyright of the play, *The Good-Natured Man* was a failure in comparison with the great popularity of its obvious if not avowed rival, *False Delicacy*.

The failure of *The Good-Natured Man* was due mainly, of course, to the intrenchment of sentimentalism, against which even Sheridan was soon to struggle, but shortly to capitulate. Goldsmith's preface to the published play contained but two paragraphs. The second expressed the author's thanks to Colman. The first is as follows:

When I undertook to write a comedy, I confess I was strongly prepossessed in favor of the poets of the last age, and strove to imitate them. The term "genteel comedy" was then unknown amongst us, and little more was desired by an audience than nature and humor, in whatever walks of life they were most conspicuous. The author of the following scenes never imagined that more would be expected of him, and therefore to delineate character has been his principal aim. Those who know anything of composition are sensible that, in pursuing humor, it will sometimes lead us into the recesses of the mean; I was even tempted to look for it in the master of a sponging-house: but in deference to the public taste, grown of late, perhaps, too delicate, the scene of the bailiffs was retrenched in the representation. In deference also to the judgment of a few friends, who think in a particular way, the scene is here restored. The author submits it to the reader in his closet; and hopes that too much refinement will not banish humor and character from ours, as it has already done from the French theater. Indeed, the French comedy is now become so very elevated and sentimental, that it has not only banished humor and Molière from the stage, but it has banished all spectators too.

By "the poets of the last age" Goldsmith referred, of course, to the comic dramatists of the Restoration and Orange periods. But *The Good-Natured Man* exhibited the qualities of "genteel" or sentimental comedy almost if not quite as much as those of the true comedy. The title itself is of the type of *The Conscious Lovers* and *False Delicacy*, and the "good-natured" hero is himself a sentimental creation. The Leontine-Olivia plot is sentimental from the beginning to the fainting of the lady, and is not unlike the Bevil-Indiana plot of *The Conscious Lovers*. Lofty, suggesting Sir Fopling Flutter of *The Man of Mode*, La Roch of *Bury Fair*, and Cimberton of *The Conscious Lovers*, is a type common to Restoration as well as to sentimental drama. There are, however, many premonitions of the immortal *She Stoops to Conquer*. The Croakers may be preliminary sketches for the Hardecasterles; the Bailiff scene certainly pointed to the tavern scene in which three of Tony's fellow roisterers more than evened the score with Goldsmith's critics:

FIRST FELLOW: The Squire has got spunk in him.

SECOND FELLOW: I loves to hear him sing bekeays he never gives us nothing that's low.

THIRD FELLOW: Oh, damn anything that's low. I cannot bear it.

Here and there in the play flashes out an excellent Goldsmithian joke or pun:

MISS RICHLAND: The gentlemen are in the marine services, I presume, sir?

HONEYWOOD: Why, madam, they do—occasionally serve in the Fleet.

Being a writer rather than a dramatist, Goldsmith did not happen to turn his hand immediately to further dramatic composition. By 1771, however, he was at work on a second drama, called, at different times, *The Mistakes of a Night*, *The Old House a New Inn*, *The Belle's Stratagem*, and, finally, *She Stoops to Conquer*. After many vicissitudes including delay at the hands of Colman, *She Stoops to Conquer* was finally produced at Covent Garden, March 15, 1773. Dr. Johnson led the applause and the play was a great success. It was produced

again in the summer of 1773 as well as the following season, and has ever since held the boards.

She Stoops to Conquer has but few traces of sentimentalism. It is a sublimated farce-comedy kept moving by the machinations of the paradoxically witty dullard, Tony Lumpkin. The success of the play is due to the genuine comic humor of the situation, to the fact that practically every character has a stellar part, to the simplicity of the plot with the ever popular case of mistaken identity, to the characterization, and above all to Goldsmith's unerring felicity of diction.

Parallel with the play's success on the boards has been its success between covers. The simple plot makes for easy reading. The style has charm which causes the play to be reread and recommended. Passages such as: "I love everything that's old—old friends, old times, old manners, old books, old wine" are hung up as wall mottoes. Phrases like "This is Liberty Hall" have gone into every-day speech. "Tony Lumpkin" has become a regular synonym for a loutish and prankish youth.

Dr. Johnson had written the prologue for *The Good-Natured Man*, and on the first night had helped to make a success of *She Stoops to Conquer*. The latter play, when printed, was consequently dedicated to the great lexicographer. Goldsmith's few and felicitous words serve to hold in juxtaposition forever the names of two of the most picturesque figures of the eighteenth or of any century.

Whether Goldsmith would have gleaned other dramas from his versatile brain, is an uncertain question. The year after the production of *She Stoops to Conquer*, he died—at the early age of forty-five. His dramatic mantle fell upon a very different but a very great comic genius some twenty-five years his junior—Richard Brinsley Sheridan (1751-1816).

Sheridan was born in Dublin. Both his parents were interested in the theater—his father, Thomas Sheridan, was a well-known actor; and his mother, Mrs. Frances Sheridan, wrote a successful sentimental play, *The Discovery* (1763). In adapting the youth for a theatrical career, however, heredity had the ample assistance of environment.

Romance, adventure, success, and fame vied with each other in their lavish bestowals upon the young Sheridan. At Bath a beautiful and famous young singer, Elizabeth Linley, was tormented by the attentions of a worthless captain who threatened to abduct her. To prevent any such action, Sheridan secured a chaperone for an elopement, whisked the lady away to France to a convent, married her, returned to fight and win a duel in England, and—finally—married his wife publicly in 1773. Before he was thirty, Sheridan had written *The Rivals*, *The School for Scandal*, and *The Critic*—the pillars of his present-day fame. The dashing adventurer and playwright of genius and his beautiful and gifted wife were the idols of London society.

The Rivals was presented at Covent Garden, January 17, 1775; but was withdrawn for revision and improvement. Exactly how much of the play's excellence was imparted to it in revision, has not been ascertained; for the earlier manuscript was not preserved; but the alteration must have been considerable. *The Rivals* was offered again later in the month, with better dialogue, considerable abridgment, the omission of such of the O'Trigger material as had been considered offensive to the Irish, and with better acting. Its success was instantaneous and the play still holds the stage.

With its "servant's gambit opening," its characters which are named in the Jonsonian manner and verge on caricatures, and the foolish sentimentalism of the unrelated Faulkland-Julia sub-plot, *The Rivals* may be said to fall short of perfect comedy. But it has many positive claims to greatness. The "referen-

tial" swearing of Acres—"odds whips and wheels," "odds blushes and blooms," "odds trigger and flints"—may have had a forerunner in the "bolts and shackles" and other engaging oaths of Sir Toby Belch in *Twelfth Night*; the "malapropisms" of Mrs. Malaprop—"female punctuation forbids me to say more" and so forth—were doubtless anticipated by the Grave-digger in *Hamlet* and by Dogberry in *Much Ado About Nothing*, but Sheridan made them his own for all who have lived since. Sheridan also showed his genius in making all his characters important and very distinguishable even though—as with Congreve—wits and dullards all speak the flashing dialogue of their creator. The scenes between son and father are highly amusing. The duel scene is farcically funny, rivaling the possible original, the perennially hilarious Aguecheek-Viola duel in *Twelfth Night*. Towering above the other merits, however, is the genuine high comedy of the play. The clash of characters is as witty as Congreve's in a play which is without Congreve's faults of coarseness or excessive complication. From its autumn blossoming in Sheridan, Restoration comedy was destined to yield its finest fruit.

Sheridan proceeded rapidly to capitalize his success. In the year of *The Rivals* (1775), two other of his plays were produced, both at Covent Garden. *St. Patrick's Day* was a slight farce. The operetta, *The Duenna*, achieved an initial run of seventy-five performances and is generally regarded as the best English light opera between Gay and Gilbert. A revival at the Lyric Theater, Hammersmith (London), was favorably received in 1924. Much of the music of *The Duenna* was composed by Thomas Linley, the talented father from whom Mrs. Sheridan inherited her musical ability. The plot hinges on a duenna's selfish but skilful aid in preventing an irascible father from marrying his daughter off for money. The operetta contains the famous song, "O What a plague is an obstinate daughter."

The next year Sheridan appeared in the rôle of manager as well as playwright. Garrick gave up in 1776 his long tenure of Drury Lane, selling out to Sheridan, Linley, and Dr. Ford. Sheridan became manager under the new ownership. Two of his own plays were offered in 1777. *A Trip to Scarborough* was an adaptation of Vanbrugh's *The Relapse*. The other play was *The School for Scandal*, which is generally regarded as the best comedy between 1611 and the recent period, the only possible competitors being *She Stoops to Conquer* and *The Rivals*.

The School for Scandal is of a purer type of comedy than its great predecessor, *The Rivals*. Instead of the Faulkland-Julia sentimentalism of the earlier play, there is, in Joseph Surface, a definite satire on sentimentalism. The "school" for scandal is of the school of Molière. The dialogue is sprightly and sparkling. The conversations between Sir Peter and Lady Teazle are the best things of their kind. The rally culminating in Sir Peter's "Aye—there again—taste! zounds! Madam, you had no taste when you married me!" is quoted in almost every briefest critical reference to Sheridan. The picture-auction is celebrated; but the finest thing in the play and one of the finest things in comedy is the screen scene, in which the various elements are brought to one hilarious climax which forces the revelation of all the characters.

With three such plays as *The Rivals*, *The Duenna*, and *The School for Scandal* to his credit at the age of twenty-five, Sheridan—like Coleridge, later, in poetry—failed signally to live up to his promise. His managerial duties naturally took up much of his time, and he soon let his popularity lead him into politics. In 1780 he was elected to Parliament as a Whig and became a great orator. In 1812, however, he was defeated for re-election. The Regent, when he came to power, forgot the aging man who was once his brilliant boon companion. Financial disaster and an unhappy second marriage also blighted

Sheridan's later years, but when he died in 1816, all parties united to pay him exceptional homage in a great funeral in Westminster Abbey.

After *The School for Scandal*, Sheridan wrote no more genuine plays. Of his three compositions, *The Critic, or a Tragedy Rehearsed* (1779), was a burlesque; and *The Stranger* (1798) and *Pizarro* (1799) were adaptations from Kotzebue.

The Critic belongs in a sequence with Beaumont and Fletcher's *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*, Buckingham's *The Rehearsal*, and Fielding's *Tom Thumb*. It has much in common with *The Rehearsal*. Sir Fretful Plagiary is identified with Richard Cumberland. Puff offers an early exposition of the importance of advertising. Two of the "strongest inducements" for buying a book are cited: "first that nobody ought to read it; and secondly, that everybody buys it." The play has hundreds of allusions—many of a topical nature, such as the sending of Plagiary's play "to the manager of Covent Garden Theater." The burlesque extends even to the scenery: "The procession of all the English rivers, and their tributaries, with their emblems, etc., begins with Händel's water music." On the whole, the play within the play is quite like that of *The Rehearsal*, the similar work of

. . . those gay days of wickedness and wit,
When Villiers criticized what Dryden writ,

as the Honorable Richard Fitzpatrick phrased it in his prologue to *The Critic*.

After the presentation of *The Critic*, the eighteenth century saw no further drama of sufficient merit to survive. Sheridan and Goldsmith had flared brilliantly above the plane of mediocrity into which drama had fallen. *The Critic* burlesqued the sentimental play intentionally and unmercifully; but the sentimental advance would not be stayed; and Sheridan—now politician and theater-manager rather than dramatic author—capitulated. A few months after the presentation of *The Critic*, he produced at Drury Lane (December 2, 1779) Mrs. Elizabeth Griffith's *The Times*. This play possessed every typical characteristic of late eighteenth century sentimentalism and was popular. Colman followed Sheridan in his turn to "what the public wants," and produced (August 5, 1780) at Covent Garden Miss Sophia Lee's *The Chapter of Accidents*. Colman in his prologue defended the lowness of the servant part of the plot and the sentimentality of the play:

Let each would-be critic know
That sentiments from genuine feelings flow.
Critics in vain declaim, and write, and rail;
Nature—eternal nature—will prevail.
Give me the bard who makes me laugh and cry,
Diverts and moves, and all I scarce know why.

* * * * *

To-night our author's in a mixed intent—
Passion and humor—low and sentiment;
Smiling in tears—a serio-comic play—
Sunshine and shower—a kind of April day!

"I sinned from virtue," says the hero. The heroine describes her error, "My sensibility ruined my virtue." Cecilia, the heroine, in a tearful scene states that she cannot wed the hero—though he ruined her. She is now too low for him. Finally, however, the heroine's father, Governor Harcourt, and the hero's father, Lord Glenmore, join the others in a scene of sentiment and reconciliation. Says Glenmore:

My prejudice in favor of birth, and even a stronger prejudice, is corrected by this lovely girl. Of her goodness of heart and greatness of mind, I have had incontestable proofs.

The Chapter of Accidents was a great popular success. After a struggle of eighty-four years, sentiment had definitely won the field in English drama. Meanwhile, however, Romanticism was stirring in all the countries of western Europe.

The term Romanticism has been defined in various fanciful and more or less scientific ways. Of the various prominent characteristics—subjectivity, preoccupation with humble life, love of the remote in time or place, delight in nature, liberalism,—not one especially lent itself to stage exploitation, and most of them were positively antipathetic to stage production. Lesser romantic qualities—a sentimental humanitarianism and a love of the bizarre—are characteristics of the Romantic drama. The breaking of the Romantic impulse upon England, cannot, however, be said to have resulted in any great dramatic literature. The incompatibility between Romanticism and the theater will be discussed in the next chapter.

Popular playwrights of the seventeen-nineties were Thomas Holcroft (1745-1809), John O'Keefe (1747-1833), and George Colman, the younger (1762-1836). O'Keefe's *Wild Oats* (1791) initiated a *genre* known as "commercial" comedy. In the *Examiner*, Leigh Hunt summed these plays up as consisting of "nothing but gentlemen in distress, and hard landlords, and generous interferers, and fathers who got a great deal of money, and sons who spent it." Thomas Holcroft, who was for a time an actor, wrote *The Crisis, or Love and Famine* (1778), *Duplicity* (1781), and *The Road to Ruin* (1792), a very popular melodrama. His translation of Beaumarchais's *Marriage of Figaro* was produced at Drury Lane in 1784 under the title of *The Follies of the Day*. George Colman, son of a playwright of the same name (1733-1794), was perhaps the best of the comic dramatists around the turn of the century. *John Bull* (1805) and *Who Wants a Guinea?* (1805) are good farce comedies. *The Iron Chest* (1796) was a successful dramatization of Godwin's *Caleb Williams*.

The ruling playwright of the early Romantic period was not an Englishman, but a German. August Friedrich Ferdinand von Kotzebue (1761-1819) was born in Weimar. After gymnasium, university, and legal training, he entered the service of the Russian government, and while living at Reval in 1789 began the long series of plays which made him famous in Germany and elsewhere in Europe. Kotzebue's best and most enduring works were plays of German life—such as *Der Wildfang* and *Die Beiden Klingsberg*; but his popularity was due mainly to his sentimental melodramas of very extravagant quality. Kotzebue's creed may be summed up as being a low form of Rousseauism. Violations of the social and moral code are forgiven in the name of Nature. By 1796 the Kotzebue vogue in England was under way, and—despite *The Rovers*, the *Anti-Jacobin's* brilliant and seemingly demolishing parody of the German drama in general and of Schiller's *The Robbers* in particular—it continued until the first years of the new century. Some twenty of Kotzebue's plays were translated. *Die Spanier in Peru* had five versions, one of them, as previously noted, by Richard Brinsley Sheridan.

Kotzebue's plays were popular not only because they hit off the popular taste. They were popular also and perhaps mainly because their author was a born dramatic technician, a genius of the stage. Kotzebue's technical influence survived his plays. Through the French well-made play, it continued into modern drama. If the English stage at the turn of the century was ruled by a purious thinker, it was ruled by a master of stagecraft, and it was through stagecraft that English drama of the later nineteenth century was to show a merit not previously equaled since the days of Shakespeare.

SHE STOOPS TO CONQUER

OR THE MISTAKES OF A NIGHT

OLIVER GOLDSMITH

CHARACTERS

SIR CHARLES MARLOW.

YOUNG MARLOW, *his son.*

HARDCASTLE.

HASTINGS.

TONY LUMPKIN.

DIGGORY.¹

STINGO, *landlord of the inn.*

Servants and Country Fellows.

MRS. HARDCASTLE.

MISS HARDCASTLE.

MISS NEVILLE.

PIMPLE, *maid to Miss Hardcastle.*

SCENE—An old-fashioned country house and inn.

TIME—Contemporary.

[DEDICATION]

TO SAMUEL JOHNSON, LL.D.

Dear Sir,—By inscribing this slight performance to you I do not mean so much to compliment you as myself. It may do me some honor to inform the public that I have lived many years in intimacy with you. It may serve the interests of mankind also to inform them that the greatest wit may be found in a character without impairing the most unaffected piety.

I have, particularly, reason to thank you for your partiality to this performance. The undertaking a comedy not merely sentimental was very dangerous; and Mr. Colman, who saw this piece in its various stages, always thought it so. However, I ventured to trust it to the public, and, though it was necessarily delayed till late in the season, I have every reason to be grateful.

I am, dear sir, your most sincere friend and admirer,

Oliver Goldsmith

¹ not in Q₁, first impression.

PROLOGUE

BY DAVID GARRICK, ESQ.

[*Enter Mr. Woodward, dressed in black, and holding a handkerchief to his eyes.*]

Excuse me, sirs, I pray—I can't yet speak—

I'm crying now—and have been all the week!

'Tis not alone this mourning suit, good masters;

I've that within—for which there are no plasters!

Pray, would you know the reason why I'm crying?

The Comic Muse, long sick, is now a-dying!

And if she goes, my tears will never stop;

For as a play'r, I can't squeeze out one drop.

I am undone, that's all—shall lose my bread—

I'd rather—but that's nothing—lose my head.

When the sweet maid is laid upon the bier,

Shuter and I shall be chief mourners here.

To her a mawkish drab of spurious breed,

Who deals in sentimentals, will succeed!

Poor Ned² and I are dead to all intents;

We can as soon speak Greek as sentiments!

² Edward Shuter, who played the part of Mr. Hardcastle.

Both nervous grown, to keep our spirits up,
 We now and then take down a hearty cup.
 What shall we do, if Comedy forsake us?
 They'll turn us out, and no one else will take us.
 But why can't I be moral?—Let me try—
 My heart thus pressing—fixed my face and eye—
 With a sententious look, that nothing means,
 (Faces are blocks in sentimental scenes)
 Thus I begin: "All is not gold that glitters;
 Pleasure seems sweet, but proves a glass of bitters.
 When Ign'rance enters, Folly is at hand;
 Learning is better far than house and land.
 Let not your virtue trip; who trips may stumble,
 And virtue is not virtue if she tumble."
 I give it up—morals won't do for me;
 To make you laugh, I must play tragedy.
 One hope remains—hearing the maid was ill,
 A Doctor comes this night to show his skill.
 To cheer her heart, and give your muscles motion,
 He, in five draughts prepared, presents a potion;
 A kind of magic charm—for be assured,
 If you will swallow it, the maid is cured.
 But desperate the Doctor and her case is
 If you reject the dose and make wry faces!
 This truth he boasts, will boast it while he lives;
 No poisonous drugs are mixed in what he gives.
 Should he succeed, you'll give him his degree;
 If not, within he will receive no fee!

The College *you*, must his pretensions back,
 Pronounce him "regular," or dub him "quack."

ACT I

SCENE I.

A Chamber in an Old-Fashioned House

[*Enter MRS. HARDCASTLE and MR. HARDCASTLE.*]

MRS. HARD. I vow, Mr. Hardcastle, you're very particular. Is there a creature in the whole country, but ourselves, that does not take a trip to town now and then, to rub off the rust a little? There's the two Miss Hogs and our neighbor, Mrs. Grigsby, go to take a month's polishing every winter.

HARD. Aye, and bring back vanity and affectation to last them the whole year. I wonder why London cannot keep its own fools at home! In my time, the follies of the town crept slowly among us, but now they travel faster than a stage-coach. Its fopperies come down, not only as inside passengers, but in the very basket.*

MRS. HARD. Aye, *your* times were fine times, indeed; you have been telling us of *them* for many a long year. Here we live in an old rumbling mansion that looks for all the world like an inn but that we never see company. Our best visitors are old Mrs. Oddfish, the curate's wife, and little Cripple-gate, the lame dancing-master; and all our entertainment your old stories of Prince Eugene and the Duke of Marlborough. I hate such old-fashioned trumpery.

HARD. And I love it. I love everything that's old—old friends, old times, old manners, old books, old wine; and I believe, Dorothy [*taking her hand*], you'll own I have been pretty fond of an old wife.

MRS. HARD. Lord, Mr. Hardcastle, you're forever at your "Dorothys" and your "old wives." You may be a

*at the back, on top of the coach.

Darby, but I'll be no Joan,⁴ I promise you. I'm not so old as you'd make me, by more than one good year. Add twenty to twenty, and make money of that.

HARD. Let me see; twenty added to twenty makes just fifty and seven.

MRS. HARD. It's false, Mr. Hardcastle. I was but twenty when I was brought to bed of Tony, that I had by Mr. Lumpkin, my first husband; and he's not come to years of discretion yet.

HARD. Nor ever will, I dare answer for him. Aye, you have taught *him* finely.

MRS. HARD. No matter. Tony Lumpkin has a good fortune. My son is not to live by his learning. I don't think a boy wants much learning to spend fifteen hundred a year.

HARD. Learning, quotha! a mere composition of tricks and mischief.

MRS. HARD. Humor, my dear—nothing but humor. Come, Mr. Hardcastle, you must allow the boy a little humor.

HARD. I'd sooner allow him an horsepond. If burning the footmen's shoes, frightening the maids, and worrying the kittens be humor, he has it. It was but yesterday he fastened my wig to the back of my chair, and when I went to make a bow, I popped my bald head in Mrs. Frizzle's face.

MRS. HARD. And am I to blame? The poor boy was always too sickly to do any good. A school would be his death. When he comes to be a little stronger, who knows what a year or two's Latin may do for him?

HARD. Latin for him!—A cat and fiddle. No, no; the alehouse and the stable are the only schools he'll ever go to.

MRS. HARD. Well, we must not snub the poor boy now, for I believe we shan't have him long among us. Anybody that looks in his face may see he's consumptive.

HARD. Aye, if growing too fat be one of the symptoms.

MRS. HARD. He coughs sometimes.

HARD. Yes, when his liquor goes the wrong way.

*a traditionally devoted couple.

MRS. HARD. I'm actually afraid of his lungs.

HARD. And truly, so am I; for he sometimes whoops like a speaking trumpet—[TONY *hallooing behind the scenes.*]—Oh, there he goes—a very consumptive figure, truly.

[*Enter TONY, crossing the stage.*]

MRS. HARD. Tony, where are you going, my charmer? Won't you give papa and I a little of your company, lovee?

TONY. I'm in haste, mother; I cannot stay.

MRS. HARD. You shan't venture out this raw evening, my dear; you look most shockingly.

TONY. I can't stay, I tell you. The Three Pigeons expects me down every moment. There's some fun going forward.

HARD. Aye, the alehouse—the old place. I thought so.

MRS. HARD. A low, paltry set of fellows.

TONY. Not so low, neither. There's Dick Muggins the exciseman, Jack Slang the horse doctor, little Aminadab that grinds the music box, and Tom Twist that spins the pewter platter.

MRS. HARD. Pray, my dear, disappoint them for one night at least.

TONY. As for disappointing *them*, I should not so much mind; but I can't abide to disappoint *myself*.

MRS. HARD. [*detaining him.*] You shan't go.

TONY. I will, I tell you.

MRS. HARD. I say you shan't.

TONY. We'll see which is strongest, you or I. [*Exit, hauling her out.*]

HARD. [*alone.*] Aye, there goes a pair that only spoil each other. But is not the whole age in a combination to drive sense and discretion out of doors? There's my pretty darling Kate; the fashions of the times have almost infected her too. By living a year or two in town, she is as fond of gauze and French frippery as the best of them.

[*Enter MISS HARDCASTLE.*]

HARD. Blessings on my pretty inno-

cence! dressed out as usual, my Kate. Goodness, what a quantity of superfluous silk hast thou got about thee, girl! I could never teach the fools of this age that the indigent world could be clothed out of the trimmings of the vain.

MISS HARD. You know our agreement, sir. You allow me the morning to receive and pay visits, and to dress in my own manner; and in the evening I put on my housewife's dress to please you.

HARD. Well, remember, I insist on the terms of our agreement; and by the by, I believe I shall have occasion to try your obedience this very evening.

MISS HARD. I protest, sir, I don't comprehend your meaning.

HARD. Then to be plain with you, Kate, I expect the young gentleman I have chosen to be your husband from town this very day. I have his father's letter, in which he informs me his son is set out and that he intends to follow himself shortly after.

MISS HARD. Indeed! I wish I had known something of this before.—Bless me, how shall I behave? It's a thousand to one I shan't like him; our meeting will be so formal, and so like a thing of business, that I shall find no room for friendship or esteem.

HARD. Depend upon it, child, I'll never control your choice; but Mr. Marlow, whom I have pitched upon, is the son of my old friend Sir Charles Marlow, of whom you have heard me talk so often. The young gentleman has been bred a scholar and is designed for an employment in the service of his country. I am told he's a man of an excellent understanding.

MISS HARD. Is he?

HARD. Very generous.

MISS HARD. I believe I shall like him.

HARD. Young and brave.

MISS HARD. I'm sure I shall like him.

HARD. And very handsome.

MISS HARD. My dear papa, say no more [*kissing his hand*], he's mine; I'll have him.

HARD. And to crown all, Kate, he's one of the most bashful and reserved young fellows in all the world.

MISS HARD. Eh! you have frozen me to death again. That word "reserved" has undone all the rest of his accomplishments. A reserved lover, it is said, always makes a suspicious husband.

HARD. On the contrary, modesty seldom resides in a breast that is not enriched with nobler virtues. It was the very feature in his character that first struck me.

MISS HARD. He must have more striking features to catch me, I promise you. However, if he be so young, so handsome, and so everything as you mention, I believe he'll do still. I think I'll have him.

HARD. Aye, Kate, but there is still an obstacle. It's more than an even wager he may not have you.

MISS HARD. My dear papa, why will you mortify one so?—Well, if he refuses, instead of breaking my heart at his indifference I'll only break my glass for its flattery, set my cap to some newer fashion, and look out for some less difficult admirer.

HARD. Bravely resolved! In the meantime I'll go prepare the servants for his reception. As we seldom see company, they want as much training as a company of recruits the first day's muster. [*Exit.*]

MISS HARD. [*alone.*] Lud, this news of papa's puts me all in a flutter. Young, handsome—these he put last, but I put them foremost. Sensible, good-natured; I like all that. But then, reserved and sheepish!—that's much against him. Yet can't he be cured of his timidity by being taught to be proud of his wife? Yes, and can't I—But I vow, I'm disposing of the husband before I have secured the lover.

[*Enter MISS NEVILLE.*]

MISS HARD. I'm glad you're come, Neville, my dear. Tell me, Constance, how do I look this evening? Is there anything whimsical about me? Is it

one of my well-looking days, child? Am I in face to-day?

MISS N. Perfectly, my dear. Yet now I look again—bless me!—sure, no accident has happened among the canary birds or the gold fishes! Has your brother or the cat been meddling? or has the last novel been too moving?

MISS HARD. No; nothing of all this. I have been threatened—I can scarce get it out—I have been threatened with a lover.

MISS N. And his name—

MISS HARD. Is Marlow.

MISS N. Indeed!

MISS HARD. The son of Sir Charles Marlow.

MISS N. As I live, the most intimate friend of Mr. Hastings, *my* admirer. They are never asunder. I believe you must have seen him when we lived in town.

MISS HARD. Never.

MISS N. He's a very singular character, I assure you. Among women of reputation and virtue he is the modestest man alive, but his acquaintance give him a very different character among creatures of another stamp; you understand me.

MISS HARD. An odd character, indeed. I shall never be able to manage him. What shall I do? Pshaw, think no more of him, but trust to occurrences for success. But how goes on your own affair, my dear? has my mother been courting you for my brother Tony as usual?

MISS N. I have just come from one of our agreeable *tête-à-têtes*. She has been saying a hundred tender things, and setting off her pretty monster as the very pink of perfection.

MISS HARD. And her partiality is such that she actually thinks him so. A fortune like yours is no small temptation. Besides, as she has the sole management of it, I'm not surprised to see her unwilling to let it go out of the family.

MISS N. A fortune like mine, which chiefly consists in jewels, is no such mighty temptation. But at any rate, if my dear Hastings be but constant,

I make no doubt to be too hard for her at last. However, I let her suppose that I am in love with her son, and she never once dreams that my affections are fixed upon another.

MISS HARD. My good brother holds out stoutly. I could almost love him for hating you so.

MISS N. It is a good-natured creature at bottom, and I'm sure would wish to see me married to anybody but himself.—But my aunt's bell rings for our afternoon's walk round the improvements. *Allons!*⁵ Courage is necessary, as our affairs are critical.

MISS HARD. "Would it were bedtime, and all were well." [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.

An Alehouse Room

[*Several shabby FELLOWS with punch and tobacco. TONY at the head of the table, a little higher than the rest, a mallet in his hand.*]

OMNES. Hurree! hurree! hurree! bravo!

1 FEL. Now, gentlemen, silence for a song. The 'squire is going to knock himself down for a song.

OMNES. Aye, a song, a song!

TONY. Then I'll sing you, gentlemen, a song I made upon this alehouse, the Three Pigeons.

SONG

Let schoolmasters puzzle their brain
With grammar, and nonsense, and learning.
Good liquor, I stoutly maintain,
Gives *genus*⁶ a better discerning.
Let them brag of their heathenish gods,
Their Lethes, their Styxes, and Stygians,
Their Quis, and their Quæs, and their Quods,
They're all but a parcel of pigeons.
Toroddle, toroddle, toroll.

When Methodist preachers come down,
A-preaching that drinking is sinful,
I'll wager the rascals a crown,
They always preach best with a skinful.
But when you come down with your pence,
For a slice of their scurvy religion,

⁵ let's go.

⁶ i.e. genius.

I'll leave it to ail men of sense,
But you, my good friend, are the pigeon.⁷
Toroddle, toroddle, toroll.

Then come, put the jorum⁸ about,
And let us be merry and clever,
Our hearts and our liquors are stout,
Here's the Three Jolly Pigeons forever.
Let some cry up woodcock or hare,
Your bustards, your ducks, and your
widgeons;
But of all the birds in the air,
Here's a health to the Three Jolly Pigeons.
Toroddle, toroddle, toroll.

OMNES. Bravo, bravo!

1 FEL. The 'squire has got spunk in him.

2 FEL. I loves to hear him sing, bekeays he never gives us nothing that's low.

3 FEL. Oh, damn anything that's low! I cannot bear it.

4 FEL. The genteel thing is the genteel thing at any time, if so be that a gentleman bees in a concatenation accordingly.

3 FEL. I like the maxum of it, Master Muggins. What tho' I am obligated to dance a bear? a man may be a gentleman for all that. May this be my poison, [raising his glass] if my bear ever dances but to the very genteelest of tunes—"Water Parted,"⁹ or the minuet in "Ariadne."¹⁰

2 FEL. What a pity it is the 'squire is not come to his own. It would be well for all the publicans within ten miles round of him.

TONY. Ecod, and so it would, Master Slang. I'd then show what it was to keep choice of company.

2 FEL. Oh, he takes after his own father for that. To be sure, old 'Squire Lumpkin was the finest gentleman I ever set my eyes on. For winding the straight horn, or beating a thicket for a hare or a wench, he never had his fellow. It was a saying in the place that he kept the best horses, dogs, and girls, in the whole county.

TONY. Ecod, and when I'm of age, I'll be no bastard, I promise you! I

⁷ dupe.

⁸ drinking bowl.

⁹ a song from Arne's *Artaxerxes*; an opera produced in 1762.

¹⁰ an opera by Handel.

have been thinking of Bet Bouncer and the miller's grey mare to begin with.—But come, my boys, drink about and be merry, for you pay no reckoning. Well, Stingo, what's the matter?

[Enter LANDLORD.]

LAND. There be two gentlemen in a post-chaise at the door. They have lost their way upo' the forest, and they are talking something about Mr. Hardcastle.

TONY. As sure as can be, one of them must be the gentleman that's coming down to court my sister. Do they seem to be Londoners?

LAND. I believe they may. They look woundily¹¹ like Frenchmen.

TONY. Then desire them to step this way, and I'll set them right in a twinkling. [Exit LANDLORD.]

Gentlemen, as they mayn't be good enough company for you, step down for a moment, and I'll be with you in the squeezing of a lemon.

[Exeunt mob.]

TONY. [alone.] Father-in-law has been calling me whelp and hound this half year. Now, if I pleased, I could be so revenged upon the old grumble-tonian. But then I'm afraid—afraid of what? I shall soon be worth fifteen hundred a year, and let him frighten me out of that if he can.

[Enter LANDLORD, conducting MARLOW and HASTINGS.]

MAR. What a tedious, uncomfortable day have we had of it! We were told it was but forty miles across the country, and we have come above three-score.

HAST. And all, Marlow, from that unaccountable reserve of yours, that would not let us inquire more frequently on the way.

MAR. I own, Hastings, I am unwilling to lay myself under an obligation to every one I meet and often stand the chance of an unmannerly answer.

HAST. At present, however, we are not likely to receive any answer.

TONY. No offence, gentlemen. But

¹¹ rustic slang for confoundedly.

I'm told you have been inquiring for one Mr. Hardcastle in these parts. Do you know what part of the country you are in?

HAST. Not in the least, sir, but should thank you for information.

TONY. Nor the way you came?

HAST. No, sir; but if you can inform us—

TONY. Why, gentlemen, if you know neither the road you are going, nor where you are, nor the road you came, the first thing I have to inform you is, that—you have lost your way.

MAR. We wanted no ghost to tell us that.

TONY. Pray, gentlemen, may I be so bold as to ask the place from whence you came?

MAR. That's not necessary towards directing us where we are to go.

TONY. No offence; but question for question is all fair, you know. Pray, gentlemen, is not this same Hardcastle a cross-grained, old-fashioned, whimsical fellow, with an ugly face, a daughter, and a pretty son?

HAST. We have not seen the gentleman, but he has the family you mention.

TONY. The daughter, a tall, trapesing, trolloping, talkative maypole; the son, a pretty, well-bred, agreeable youth, that everybody is fond of?

MAR. Our information differs in this. The daughter is said to be well-bred and beautiful; the son, an awkward booby, reared up and spoiled at his mother's apron-string.

TONY. He-he-hem!—Then, gentlemen, all I have to tell you is, that you won't reach Mr. Hardcastle's house this night, I believe.

HAST. Unfortunate!

TONY. It's a damned long, dark, boggy, dirty, dangerous way.—Stingo, tell the gentlemen the way to Mr. Hardcastle's [*winking upon the LANDLORD*].—Mr. Hardcastle's, of Quagmire Marsh; you understand me.

LAND. Master Hardcastle's! Lack-a-daisy, my masters, you're come a deadly deal wrong! When you came

to the bottom of the hill, you should have crossed down Squash Lane.

MAR. Cross down Squash Lane!

LAND. Then you were to keep straight forward till you came to four roads.

MAR. Come to where four roads meet?

TONY. Aye; but you must be sure to take only one of them.

MAR. Oh, sir; you're facetious.

TONY. Then keeping to the right, you are to go sideways till you come upon Crackskull Common. There you must look sharp for the track of the wheel, and go forward till you come to farmer Murrain's barn. Coming to the farmer's barn, you are to turn to the right, and then to the left, and then to the right about again, till you find out the old mill—

MAR. Zounds, man! we could as soon find out the longitude!

HAST. What's to be done, Marlow?

MAR. This house promises but a poor reception; though perhaps the landlord can accommodate us.

LAND. Alack, master, we have but one spare bed in the whole house.

TONY. And to my knowledge, that's taken up by three lodgers already. [*after a pause, in which the rest seem disconcerted.*].—I have hit it. Don't you think, Stingo, our landlady could accommodate the gentlemen by the fireside, with—three chairs and a bolster?

HAST. I hate sleeping by the fireside.

MAR. And I detest your three chairs and a bolster.

TONY. You do, do you? then, let me see—what if you go on a mile further to the Buck's Head? the old Buck's Head on the hill, one of the best inns in the whole county.

HAST. Oh, ho! so we have escaped an adventure for this night, however.

LAND. [*apart to TONY.*] Sure, you ben't sending them to your father's as an inn, be you?

TONY. Mum, you fool you. Let them find that out. [*to them.*] You have only to keep on straight forward

Will you come to a large, old house by the roadside. You'll see a pair of large horns over the door. That's the sign. Drive up the yard, and call stoutly about you.

HAST. Sir, we are obliged to you. The servants can't miss the way?

TONY. No, no. But I tell you, though, the landlord is rich, and going to leave off business; so he wants to be thought a gentleman, saving your presence—he! he! he! He'll be for giving you his company; and, ecod, if you mind him, he'll persuade you that his mother was an alderman and his aunt a justice of peace.

LAND. A troublesome old blade, to be sure, but a keeps as good wines and beds as any in the whole country.

MAR. Well, if he supplies us with these, we shall want no further connection. We are to turn to the right, did you say?

TONY. No, no; straight forward. I'll just step myself and show you a piece of the way. [*to the LANDLORD.*] Mum!

LAND. Ah, bless your heart for a sweet, pleasant—damn'd mischievous son of a whore. [*Exeunt.*]

ACT II

The Living Room in an Old-Fashioned House

[*Enter HARDCASTLE, followed by three or four awkward SERVANTS.*]

HARD. Well, I hope you are perfect in the table exercise I have been teaching you these three days. You all know your posts and your places and can show that you have been used to good company without ever stirring from home?

OMNES. Aye, aye.

HARD. When company comes you are not to pop out and stare, and then run in again like frightened rabbits in a warren.

OMNES. No, no!

HARD. You, Diggory, whom I have taken from the barn, are to make a show at the side-table; and you, Roger, whom I have advanced from the plough, are to place yourself behind *my* chair.—But you're not to stand so, with your hands in your pockets. Take your hands from your pockets, Roger; and from your head, you blockhead, you! See how Diggory carries his hands. They're a little too stiff, indeed, but that's no great matter.

DIG. Aye, mind how I hold them. I learned to hold my hands this way when I was upon drill for the militia. And so being upon drill—

HARD. You must not be so talkative, Diggory. You must be all attention to the guests. You must hear us talk and not think of talking; you must see us drink and not think of drinking; you must see us eat and not think of eating.

DIG. By the laws, your worship, that's perfectly impossible. Whenever Diggory sees yeating going forward, ecod, he's always wishing for a mouthful himself.

HARD. Blockhead! Is not a bellyful in the kitchen as good as a bellyful in the parlor? Stay your stomach with that reflection.

DIG. Ecod, I thank your worship; I'll make a shift to stay my stomach with a slice of cold beef in the pantry.

HARD. Diggory, you are too talkative.—Then, if I happen to say a good thing, or tell a good story at table, you must not all burst out a-laughing, as if you made part of the company.

DIG. Then, ecod, your worship must not tell the story of Ould Grouse in the gunroom; I can't help laughing at that—he! he! he!—for the soul of me. We have laughed at that these twenty years—ha! ha! ha!

HARD. Ha! ha! ha! The story is a good one. Well, honest Diggory, you may laugh at that—but still remember to be attentive. Suppose one of the company should call for a glass of wine, how will you behave? A glass of wine, sir, if you please. [*to DIGGORY.*—Eh, why don't you move?

DIG. Ecod, your worship, I never have courage till I see the eatables and drinkables brought upo' the table, and then I'm as bauld as a lion.

HARD. What, will nobody move?

1 SERV. I'm not to leave this place.

2 SERV. I'm sure it's no place of mine.

3 SERV. Nor mine, for sartain.

DIG. Wauns,¹² and I'm sure it canna be mine.

HARD. You numskulls! and so while, like your betters, you are quarrelling for places, the guests must be starved! O you dunces! I find I must begin all over again—But don't I hear a coach drive into the yard? To your posts, you blockheads. I'll go in the meantime and give my old friend's son a hearty reception at the gate.

[Exit HARDCASTLE.]

DIG. By the elevens, my place is gone quite out of my head.

ROGER. I know that my place is to be everywhere.

1 SERV. Where the devil is mine?

2 SERV. My place is to be nowhere at all, and so I'ze go about my business.

[*Exeunt SERVANTS, running about as if frightened, different ways.*]

[*Enter SERVANT with candles, showing in MARLOW and HASTINGS.*]

SERV. Welcome, gentlemen, very welcome! This way.

HAST. After the disappointments of the day, welcome once more, Charles, to the comforts of a clean room and a good fire. Upon my word, a very well-looking house—antique but creditable.

MAR. The usual fate of a large mansion. Having first ruined the master by good housekeeping, it at last comes to levy contributions as an inn.

HAST. As you say, we passengers are to be taxed to pay all these fineries. I have often seen a good sideboard, or a marble chimney-piece, though not actually put in the bill, inflame a reckoning confoundedly.

MAR. Travellers, George, must pay

¹² cf. "zounds" and "wounds."

in all places; the only difference is, that in good inns you pay dearly for luxuries, in bad inns you are fleeced and starved.

HAST. You have lived very much among them. In truth, I have been often surprised that you who have seen so much of the world, with your natural good sense and your many opportunities, could never yet acquire a requisite share of assurance.

MAR. The Englishman's malady.—But tell me, George, where could I have learned that assurance you talk of? My life has been chiefly spent in a college or an inn, in seclusion from that lovely part of the creation that chiefly teach men confidence. I don't know that I was ever familiarly acquainted with a single modest woman—except my mother.—But among females of another class, you know—

HAST. Aye, among them you are impudent enough, of all conscience.

MAR. They are of us, you know.

HAST. But in the company of women of reputation I never saw such an idiot, such a trembler. You look for all the world as if you wanted an opportunity of stealing out of the room.

MAR. Why, man, that's because I don't want to steal out of the room! Faith! I have often formed a resolution to break the ice and rattle away at any rate. But I don't know how, a single glance from a pair of fine eyes has totally overset my resolution. An impudent fellow may counterfeit modesty, but I'll be hanged if a modest man can ever counterfeit impudence.

HAST. If you could but say half the fine things to them that I have heard you lavish upon the bar-maid of an inn, or even a college bed-maker—

MAR. Why, George, I can't say fine things to them; they freeze, they petrify me. They may talk of a comet or a burning mountain, or some such bagatelle; but to me, a modest woman dressed out in all her finery, is the most tremendous object of the whole creation.

HAST. Ha! ha! ha! At this rate

man, how can you ever expect to marry?

MAR. Never, unless, as among kings and princes, my bride were to be courted by proxy. If, indeed, like an Eastern bridegroom, one were to be introduced to a wife he never saw before, it might be endured. But to go through all the terrors of a formal courtship, together with the episode of aunts, grandmothers, and cousins, and at last to blurt out the broad staring question of "Madam, will you marry me?"—no, no, that's a strain much above me, I assure you.

HAST. I pity you. But how do you intend behaving to the lady you are come down to visit at the request of your father?

MAR. As I behave to all other ladies. Bow very low, answer yes or no to all her demands—But for the rest, I don't think I shall venture to look in her face till I see my father's again.

HAST. I'm surprised that one who is so warm a friend can be so cool a lover.

MAR. To be explicit, my dear Hastings, my chief inducement down was to be instrumental in forwarding your happiness, not my own. Miss Neville loves you; the family don't know you; as my friend you are sure of a reception, and let honor do the rest.

HAST. My dear Marlow!—But I'll suppress the emotion. Were I a wretch, meanly seeking to carry off a fortune, you should be the last man in the world I would apply to for assistance. But Miss Neville's person is all I ask, and that is mine, both from her deceased father's consent and her own inclination.

MAR. Happy man! You have talents and art to captivate any woman. I'm doomed to adore the sex, and yet to converse with the only part of it I despise. This stammer in my address, and this awkward, prepossessing visage of mine, can never permit me to soar above the reach of a milliner's 'prentice, or one of the duchesses¹³ of Drury

¹³ courtesans.

Lane.—Pshaw! this fellow here to interrupt us.

[Enter **HARDCASTLE**.]

HARD. Gentlemen, once more you are heartily welcome. Which is Mr. Marlow? Sir, you're heartily welcome. It's not my way, you see, to receive my friends with my back to the fire. I like to give them a hearty reception in the old style at my gate. I like to see their horses and trunks taken care of.

MAR. [*aside*.] He has got our names from the servants already. [*to him*.] We approve your caution and hospitality, sir. [*to HASTINGS*.] I have been thinking, George, of changing our travelling dresses in the morning. I am grown confoundedly ashamed of mine.

HARD. I beg, Mr. Marlow, you'll use no ceremony in this house.

HAST. [*aside*.] I fancy, [Charles,] you're right; the first blow is half the battle. I intend opening the campaign with the white and gold.

HARD. Mr. Marlow—Mr. Hastings—gentlemen—pray be under no constraint in this house. This is Liberty Hall, gentlemen. You may do just as you please here.

MAR. [*aside*.] Yet, George, if we open the campaign too fiercely at first, we may want ammunition before it is over. I think to reserve the embroidery to secure a retreat.

HARD.—Your talking of a retreat, Mr. Marlow, puts me in mind of the Duke of Marlborough, when we went to besiege Denain. He first summoned the garrison—

MAR. Don't you think the *ventre d'or* waistcoat will do with the plain brown?

HARD.—He first summoned the garrison, which might consist of about five thousand men—

HAST. I think not: brown and yellow mix but very poorly.

HARD.—I say, gentlemen, as I was telling you, he summoned the garrison, which might consist of about five thousand men—

MAR. The girls like finery.

HARD.—Which might consist of about five thousand men, well appointed with stores, ammunition, and other implements of war. "Now," says the Duke of Marlborough to George Brooks, that stood next to him—you must have heard of George Brooks—"I'll pawn my dukedom," says he, "but I take that garrison without spilling a drop of blood." So—

MAR. What, my good friend, if you gave us a glass of punch in the meantime? It would help us to carry on the siege with vigor.

HARD. Punch, sir! [*aside.*] This is the most unaccountable kind of modesty I ever met with.

MAR. Yes, sir, punch. A glass of warm punch, after our journey, will be comfortable. This is Liberty Hall, you know.

HARD. Here's a cup, sir.

MAR. [*aside.*] So this fellow, in his Liberty Hall, will only let us have just what he pleases.

HARD. [*taking the cup.*] I hope you'll find it to your mind. I have prepared it with my own hands, and I believe you'll own the ingredients are tolerable. Will you be so good as to pledge me, sir? Here, Mr. Marlow, here is to our better acquaintance.

[*Drinks.*]

MAR. [*aside.*] A very impudent fellow this! but he's a character, and I'll humor him a little.—Sir, my service to you.

[*Drinks.*]

HAST. [*aside.*] I see this fellow wants to give us his company, and forgets that he's an innkeeper before he has learned to be a gentleman.

MAR. From the excellence of your cup, my old friend, I suppose you have a good deal of business in this part of the country. Warm work, now and then, at elections, I suppose.

HARD. No, sir, I have long given that work over. Since our betters have hit upon the expedient of electing each other, there is no business "for us that sell ale."

HAST. So! then you have no turn for politics, I find.

HARD. Not in the least. There was a time, indeed, I fretted myself about the mistakes of government, like other people; but finding myself every day grow more angry, and the government growing no better, I left it to mend itself. Since that, I no more trouble my head about Heyder Ally, or Ally Cawn¹⁴ than about Ally Croaker.¹⁵ Sir, my service to you.

HAST. So that with eating above stairs and drinking below, with receiving your friends within and amusing them without, you lead a good, pleasant, bustling life of it.

HARD. I do stir about a great deal, that's certain. Half the differences of the parish are adjusted in this very parlor.

MAR. [*after drinking.*] And you have an argument in your cup, old gentleman, better than any in Westminster Hall.¹⁶

HARD. Aye, young gentleman, that, and a little philosophy.

MAR. [*aside.*] Well, this is the first time I ever heard of an innkeeper's philosophy.

HAST. So then, like an experienced general, you attack them on every quarter. If you find their reason manageable, you attack it with your philosophy; if you find they have no reason, you attack them with this. Here's your health, my philosopher.

[*Drinks.*]

HARD. Good, very good! Thank you; ha! ha! Your generalship puts me in mind of Prince Eugene when he fought the Turks at the battle of Belgrade.¹⁷ You shall hear.

MAR. Instead of the battle of Belgrade, I believe it's almost time to talk about supper. What has your philosophy got in the house for supper?

HARD. For supper, sir! [*aside.*] Was ever such a request to a man in his own house?

MAR. Yes, sir, supper, sir; I begin to feel an appetite. I shall make devil-

¹⁴ Indian rulers.

¹⁵ a popular Irish tune.

¹⁶ where the courts of law held their sessions.

¹⁷ in 1717.

ish work to-night in the larder, I promise you.

HARD. [*aside.*] Such a brazen dog sure never my eyes beheld!—[*to him.*] Why, really, sir, as for supper I can't well tell. My Dorothy and the cook-maid settle these things between them. I leave these kind of things entirely to them.

MAR. You do, do you?

HARD. Entirely. By-the-bye, I believe they are in actual consultation upon what's for supper this moment in the kitchen.

MAR. Then I beg they'll admit me as one of their privy council. It's a way I have got. When I travel, I always choose to regulate my own supper. Let the cook be called. No offence I hope, sir?

HARD. Oh, no, sir, none in the least. Yet I don't know how; our Bridget, the cook-maid, is not very communicative upon these occasions. Should we send for her, she might scold us all out of the house.

HAST. Let's see your list of the larder then. I ask it as a favor. I always match my appetite to my bill of fare.

MAR. [*to HARDCASTLE, who looks at them with surprise.*] Sir, he's very right, and it's my way too.

HARD. Sir, you have a right to command here.—Here, Roger, bring us the bill of fare for to-night's supper; I believe it's drawn out.—Your manner, Mr. Hastings, puts me in mind of my uncle, Colonel Wallop. It was a saying of his that no man was sure of his supper till he had eaten it.

HAST. [*aside.*] All upon the high ropes! His uncle a colonel! we shall soon hear of his mother being a justice of the peace.—But let's hear the bill of fare.

MAR. [*perusing.*] What's here? For the first course; for the second course; for the dessert. The devil, sir, do you think we have brought down a whole Joiners' Company, or the Corporation of Bedford, to eat up such a supper? Two or three little things, clean and comfortable, will do.

HAST. But let's hear it.

MAR. [*reading.*] For the first course, at the top, a pig and prune sauce.

HAST. Damn your pig, I say.

MAR. And damn your prune sauce, say I.

HARD. And yet, gentlemen, to men that are hungry, pig with prune sauce is very good eating.

MAR. At the bottom, a calf's tongue and brains.

HAST. Let your brains be knocked out, my good sir; I don't like them.

MAR. Or you may clap them on a plate by themselves; I do.

HARD. [*aside.*] Their impudence confounds me!—[*to them.*] Gentlemen, you are my guests; make what alterations you please. Is there anything else you wish to retrench or alter, gentlemen?

MAR. Item: a pork pie, a boiled rabbit and sausages, a florentine,¹⁸ a shak-ing pudding, and a dish of tiff—taff—taffety cream.

HAST. Confound your made dishes; I shall be as much at a loss in this house as at a green and yellow dinner at the French ambassador's table. I'm for plain eating.

HARD. I'm sorry, gentlemen, that I have nothing you like, but if there be anything you have a particular fancy to—

MAR. Why, really, sir, your bill of fare is so exquisite that any one part of it is full as good as another. Send us what you please.—So much for supper. And now to see that our beds are aired and properly taken care of.

HARD. I entreat you'll leave all that to me. You shall not stir a step.

MAR. Leave that to you! I protest, sir, you must excuse me; I always look to these things myself.

HARD. I must insist, sir, you'll make yourself easy on that head.

MAR. [*starting out.*] You see I'm resolved on it. [*aside.*] A very troublesome fellow this, as I ever met with.

HARD. Well, sir, I'm resolved at least to attend you. [*aside.*] This may be

¹⁸ a pastry.

modern modesty, but I never saw anything look so like old-fashioned impudence.

[*Exeunt MARLOW and HARDCASTLE.*]

HAST. [*alone.*] So! I find this fellow's civilities begin to grow troublesome. But who can be angry at those assiduities which are meant to please him?—Ha! what do I see? Miss Neville, by all that's happy!

[*Enter MISS NEVILLE.*]

MISS NEVILLE. My dear Hastings! To what unexpected good fortune, to what accident, am I to ascribe this happy meeting?

HAST. Rather let me ask the same question, as I could never have hoped to meet my dearest Constance at an inn.

MISS N. An inn! Sure, you mistake; my aunt, my guardian, lives here. What could induce you to think this house an inn?

HAST. My friend Mr. Marlow, with whom I came down, and I have been sent here as to an inn, I assure you. A young fellow whom we accidentally met at a house hard by, directed us hither.

MISS N. Certainly it must be one of my hopeful cousin's tricks, of whom you have heard me talk so often!—ha! ha! ha!

HAST. He whom your aunt intends for you? he of whom I have such just apprehensions?

MISS N. You have nothing to fear from him, I assure you. You'd adore him if you knew how heartily he despises me. My aunt knows it too and has undertaken to court me for him, and actually begins to think she has made a conquest.

HAST. Thou dear dissembler! You must know, my Constance, I have just seized this happy opportunity of my friend's visit here to get admittance into the family. The horses that carried us down are now fatigued with their journey, but they'll soon be refreshed; and then, if my dearest girl will trust in her faithful Hastings, we shall soon be landed in France, where

even among slaves the laws of marriage are respected.

MISS N. I have often told you that though ready to obey you, I yet should leave my little fortune behind with reluctance. The greatest part of it was left me by my uncle, the India director, and chiefly consists in jewels. I have been for some time persuading my aunt to let me wear them. I fancy I'm very near succeeding. The instant they are put into my possession, you shall find me ready to make them and myself yours.

HAST. Perish the baubles! Your person is all I desire. In the meantime, my friend Marlow must not be let into his mistake. I know the strange reserve of his temper is such, that if abruptly informed of it, he would instantly quit the house before our plan was ripe for execution.

MISS N. But how shall we keep him in the deception? Miss Hardcastle is just returned from walking; what if we still continue to deceive him?—This way—

[*They confer.*]

[*Enter MARLOW.*]

MAR. The assiduities of these good people tease me beyond bearing. My host seems to think it ill manners to leave me alone, and so he claps not only himself but his old-fashioned wife on my back. They talk of coming to sup with us too; and then, I suppose, we are to run the gauntlet through all the rest of the family.—What have we got here?

HAST. My dear Charles! Let me congratulate you!—The most fortunate accident!—Who do you think is just alighted?

MAR. Cannot guess.

HAST. Our mistresses, boy—Miss Hardcastle and Miss Neville. Give me leave to introduce Miss Constance Neville to your acquaintance. Happening to dine in the neighborhood, they called on their return to take fresh horses here. Miss Hardcastle has just stepped into the next room, and will be back in an instant. Wasn't it lucky? eh!

MAR. [*aside.*] I have been mortified enough of all conscience, and here comes something to complete my embarrassment.

HAST. Well, but wasn't it the most fortunate thing in the world?

MAR. Oh, yes! Very fortunate—a most joyful encounter.—But our dresses, George, you know are in disorder—What if we should postpone the happiness till to-morrow—to-morrow at her own house?—It will be every bit as convenient—and rather more respectful.—To-morrow let it be.

[*Offering to go.*]

MISS N. By no means, sir. Your ceremony will displease her. The disorder of your dress will show the ardor of your impatience. Besides, she knows you are in the house, and will permit you to see her.

MAR. Oh, the devil! how shall I support it? Hem! hem! Hastings, you must not go. You are to assist me, you know. I shall be confoundedly ridiculous. Yet, hang it! I'll take courage. Hem!

HAST. Pshaw, man! it's but the first plunge, and all's over. She's but a woman, you know.

MAR. And of all women she that I dread most to encounter.

[*Enter MISS HARDCASTLE, as returned from walking; a bonnet, &c.*]

HAST. [*introducing them.*] Miss Hardcastle, Mr. Marlow. I'm proud of bringing two persons of such merit together, that only want to know, to esteem each other.

MISS HARD. [*aside.*] Now for meeting my modest gentleman with a demure face, and quite in his own manner. [*after a pause, in which he appears very uneasy and disconcerted.*] I'm glad of your safe arrival, sir. I'm told you had some accidents by the way.

MAR. Only a few, madam. Yes, we had some. Yes, madam, a good many accidents, but should be sorry—madam—or rather glad of any accidents—that are so agreeably concluded.—Hem!

HAST. [*to him.*] You never spoke better in your whole life. Keep it up, and I'll insure you the victory.

MISS HARD. I'm afraid you flatter, sir. You that have seen so much of the finest company, can find little entertainment in an obscure corner of the country.

MAR. [*gathering courage.*] I have lived, indeed, in the world, madam, but I have kept very little company. I have been but an observer upon life, madam, while others were enjoying it.

MISS N. But that, I am told, is the way to enjoy it at last.

HAST. [*to him.*] Cicero never spoke better. Once more, and you are confirmed in assurance forever.

MAR. [*to him.*] Hem! Stand by me, then, and when I'm down, throw in a word or two to set me up again.

MISS HARD. An observer, like you, upon life, were, I fear, disagreeably employed, since you must have had much more to censure than to approve.

MAR. Pardon me, madam. I was always willing to be amused. The folly of most people is rather an object of mirth than uneasiness.

HAST. [*to him.*] Bravo, bravo! Never spoke so well in your whole life.—Well, Miss Hardcastle, I see that you and Mr. Marlow are going to be very good company. I believe our being here will but embarrass the interview.

MAR. Not in the least, Mr. Hastings. We like your company of all things.—[*to him.*] Zounds! George, sure, you won't go? How can you leave us?

HAST. Our presence will but spoil conversation; so we'll retire to the next room. [*to him.*] You don't consider, man, that we are to manage a little tête-à-tête of our own.

[*Exeunt HASTINGS and MISS NEVILLE.*]

MISS HARD. [*after a pause.*] But you have not been wholly an observer, I presume, sir; the ladies, I should hope, have employed some part of your addresses.

MAR. [*relapsing into timidity.*] Pardon me, madam, I—I—I—as yet have studied—only—to—deserve them.

MISS HARD. And that, some say, is the very worst way to obtain them.

MAR. Perhaps so, madam, but I love to converse only with the more grave and sensible part of the sex.—But I'm afraid I grow tiresome.

MISS HARD. Not at all, sir. There is nothing I like so much as grave conversation myself; I could hear it forever. Indeed, I have often been surprised how a man of *sentiment* could ever admire those light, airy pleasures, where nothing reaches the heart.

MAR. It's—a disease—of the mind, madam. In the variety of tastes there must be some who, wanting a relish—for—um—a—um.

MISS HARD. I understand you, sir. There must be some who, wanting a relish for refined pleasures, pretend to despise what they are incapable of tasting.

MAR. My meaning, madam, but infinitely better expressed. And I can't help observing—a—

MISS HARD. [*aside.*] Who could ever suppose this fellow impudent upon some occasions? [*to him.*] You were going to observe, sir—

MAR. I was observing, madam—I protest, madam, I forget what I was going to observe.

MISS HARD. [*aside.*] I vow, and so do I. [*to him.*] You were observing, sir, that in this age of hypocrisy—something about hypocrisy, sir.

MAR. Yes, madam. In this age of hypocrisy there are few who upon strict inquiry do not—a—a—a—

MISS HARD. I understand you perfectly, sir.

MAR. [*aside.*] Egad! and that's more than I do myself.

MISS HARD. You mean that in this hypocritical age there are few that do not condemn in public what they practise in private, and think they pay every debt to virtue when they praise it.

MAR. True, madam; those who have most virtue in their mouths, have least of it in their bosoms.—But I'm sure I tire you, madam.

MISS HARD. Not in the least, sir;

there's something so agreeable and spirited in your manner, such life and force—pray, sir, go on.

MAR. Yes, madam. I was saying—that there are some occasions when a total want of courage, madam, destroys all the—and puts us—upon a—a—a—

MISS HARD. I agree with you entirely; a want of courage upon some occasions assumes the appearance of ignorance, and betrays us when we most want to excel. I beg you'll proceed.

MAR. Yes, madam. Morally speaking, madam—but I see Miss Neville expecting us in the next room. I would not intrude for the world.

MISS HARD. I protest, sir, I never was more agreeably entertained in all my life. Pray go on!

MAR. Yes, madam; I was—but she beckons us to join her. Madam, shall I do myself the honor to attend you?

MISS HARD. Well, then, I'll follow.

MAR. [*aside.*] This pretty, smooth dialogue has done for me. [*Exit.*]

MISS HARD. [*alone.*] Ha! ha! ha! Was there ever such a sober, sentimental interview? I'm certain he scarce looked in my face the whole time. Yet the fellow but for his unaccountable bashfulness is pretty well too. He has good sense, but then so buried in his fears that it fatigues one more than ignorance. If I could teach him a little confidence, it would be doing somebody that I know a piece of service. But who is that somebody?—that, faith, is a question I can scarce answer. [*Exit.*]

[*Enter TONY and MISS NEVILLE, followed by Mrs. HARDCASTLE and HASTINGS.*]

TONY. What do you follow me for, cousin Con? I wonder you're not ashamed to be so very engaging.

MISS NEVILLE. I hope, cousin, one may speak to one's own relations and not be to blame.

TONY. Aye, but I know what sort of a relation you want to make me, though; but it won't do. I tell you,

cousin Con, it won't do; so I beg you'll keep your distance—I want no nearer relationship.

[*She follows, coquetting him to the back scene.*]

MRS. HARD. Well! I vow, Mr. Hastings, you are very entertaining. There's nothing in the world I love to talk of so much as London and the fashions, though I was never there myself.

HAST. Never there! You amaze me! From your air and manner, I concluded you had been bred all your life either at Ranelagh, St. James's, or Tower Wharf.¹⁹

MRS. HARD. O! sir, you're only pleased to say so. We country persons can have no manner at all. I'm in love with the town, and that serves to raise me above some of our neighboring rustics; but who can have a manner that has never seen the Pantheon, the Grotto Gardens, the Borough, and such places where the nobility chiefly resort? All I can do is to enjoy London at second hand. I take care to know every *tête-à-tête* from the Scandalous Magazine,²⁰ and have all the fashions, as they come out, in a letter from the two Miss Ricketts of Crooked Lane.—Pray how do you like this head, Mr. Hastings?

HAST. Extremely elegant and *déga-gée*,²¹ upon my word, madam. Your *friseur* is a Frenchman, I suppose?

MRS. HARD. I protest, I dressed it myself from a print in the Ladies' Memorandum-book for the last year.

HAST. Indeed! Such a head in a side-box at the playhouse would draw as many gazers as my Lady May'ress at a City ball.

MRS. HARD. I vow, since inoculation began, there is no such thing to be seen as a plain woman; so one must dress a little particular, or one may escape in the crowd.

¹⁹ Only the first two of these places was fashionable. Hastings is playing upon Mrs. Hardcastle's ignorance of London.

²⁰ The *Town and Country Magazine* was often thus referred to.

²¹ at ease.

HAST. But that can never be your case, madam, in any dress.

[*Bowing.*]

MRS. HARD. Yet what signifies my dressing when I have such a piece of antiquity by my side as Mr. Hardcastle? All I can say will never argue down a single button from his clothes. I have often wanted him to throw off his great flaxen wig, and where he was bald, to plaster it over, like my Lord Pately, with powder.

HAST. You are right, madam; for as among the ladies there are none ugly, so among the men there are none old.

MRS. HARD. But what do you think his answer was? Why, with his usual Gothic²² vivacity, he said I only wanted him to throw off his wig to convert it into a *tête* for my own wearing.

HAST. Intolerable! At your age you may wear what you please, and it must become you.

MRS. HARD. Pray, Mr. Hastings, what do you take to be the most fashionable age about town?

HAST. Some time ago forty was all the mode, but I'm told the ladies intend to bring up fifty for the ensuing winter.

MRS. HARD. Seriously? Then I shall be too young for the fashion.

HAST. No lady begins now to put on jewels till she's past forty. For instance, Miss there, in a polite circle, would be considered as a child—as a mere maker of samplers.

MRS. HARD. And yet Mrs. Niece thinks herself as much a woman and is as fond of jewels as the oldest of us all.

HAST. Your niece, is she? And that young gentleman, a brother of yours, I should presume?

MRS. HARD. My son, sir. They are contracted to each other. Observe their little sports. They fall in and out ten times a day, as if they were man and wife already. [*to them.*] Well, Tony, child, what soft things are you saying to your cousin Constance this evening?

TONY. I have been saying no soft

²² uncouth, barbarous.

things, but that it's very hard to be followed about so. Ecod! I've not a place in the house now that's left to myself but the stable!

MRS. HARD. Never mind him, Con, my dear. He's in another story behind your back.

MISS N. There's something generous in my cousin's manner. He falls out before faces to be forgiven in private.

TONY. That's a damned confounded—crack.

MRS. HARD. Ah! he's a sly one. Don't you think they are like each other about the mouth, Mr. Hastings?—the Blenkinsop mouth to a T! They're of a size, too.—Back to back, my pretties, that Mr. Hastings may see you. Come, Tony.

TONY. You had as good not make me, I tell you. [*Measuring.*]

MISS NEVILLE. O lud! he has almost cracked my head.

MRS. HARD. Oh, the monster! For shame, Tony! You a man, and behave so!

TONY. If I'm a man, let me have my fortin. Ecod! I'll not be made a fool of no longer.

MRS. HARD. Is this, ungrateful boy, all that I'm to get for the pains I have taken in your education—I that have rocked you in your cradle and fed that pretty mouth with a spoon! Did not I work that waistcoat to make you genteel? Did not I prescribe for you every day, and weep while the receipt was operating?

TONY. Ecod! you had reason to weep, for you have been dosing me ever since I was born. I have gone through every receipt in *The Complete Huswife* ten times over, and you have thoughts of coursing me through *Quincy*²³ next spring. But, ecod! I tell you, I'll not be made a fool of no longer.

MRS. HARD. Wasn't it all for your good, viper?—Wasn't it all for your good?

TONY. I wish you'd let me and my

²³ a doctor who wrote *The Complete English Dispensary*.

good alone, then. Snubbing this way when I'm in spirits! If I'm to have any good, let it come of itself—not to keep dinging it, dinging it into one so.

MRS. HARD. That's false; I never see you when you're in spirits. No, Tony, you then go to the alehouse or kennel. I'm never to be delighted with your agreeable wild notes, unfeeling monster!

TONY. Ecod! mamma, your own notes are the wildest of the two.

MRS. HARD. Was ever the like? But I see he wants to break my heart: I see he does!

HAST. Dear madam, permit me to lecture the young gentleman a little. I'm certain I can persuade him to his duty.

MRS. HARD. Well, I must retire. Come, Constance, my love. You see, Mr. Hastings, the wretchedness of my situation; was ever poor woman so plagued with a dear sweet, pretty, provoking, undutiful boy?

[*Exeunt* MRS. HARDCASTLE and MISS NEVILLE.]

TONY. [*singing.*] "There was a young man riding by, and fain would have his will. Rang do didlo dee."—Don't mind her. Let her cry. It's the comfort of her heart. I have seen her and sister cry over a book for an hour together, and they said they liked the book the better the more it made them cry.

HAST. Then you're no friend to the ladies, I find, my pretty young gentleman?

TONY. That's as I find 'um.

HAST. Not to her of your mother's choosing, I dare answer. And yet she appears to me a pretty, well-tempered girl.

TONY. That's because you don't know her as well as I. Ecod! I know every inch about her, and there's not a more bitter, cantankerous toad in all Christendom.

HAST. [*aside.*] Pretty encouragement this for a lover!

TONY. I have seen her since the height of that. [*holding out his arm.*]

She has as many tricks as a hare in a thicket or a colt the first day's breaking.

HAST. To me she appears sensible and silent.

TONY. Aye, before company. But when she's with her playmates, she's as loud as a hog in a gate.

HAST. But there is a meek modesty about her that charms me.

TONY. Yes, but curb her never so little, she kicks up and you're flung in a ditch.

HAST. Well, but you must allow her a little beauty—yes, you must allow her some beauty.

TONY. Bandbox! She's all a made-up thing, mun. Ah! could you but see Bet Bouncer of these parts, you might then talk of beauty. Ecod, she has two eyes as black as sloes and cheeks as broad and red as a pulpit-cushion. She'd make two of she.

HAST. Well, what say you to a friend that would take this bitter bargain off your hands?

TONY. Anon?

HAST. Would you thank him that would take Miss Neville, and leave you to happiness and your dear Betsy?

TONY. Aye; but where is there such a friend, for who would take her?

HAST. I am he. If you but assist me, I'll engage to whip her off to France and you shall never hear more of her.

TONY. Assist you! Ecod I will, to the last drop of my blood. I'll clap a pair of horses to your chaise that shall trundle you off in a twinkling, and maybe get you a part of her fortin beside, in jewels, that you little dream of.

HAST. My dear 'squire, this looks like a lad of spirit.

TONY. Come along, then, and you shall see more of my spirit before you have done with me. *[Singing.]*

We are the boys
That fears no noise
Where the thundering cannons roar.

[Exeunt.]

ACT III

The setting is the same

Time, evening

[Enter HARDCASTLE alone.]

HARD. What could my old friend Sir Charles mean by recommending his son as the modestest young man in town? To me he appears the most impudent piece of brass that ever spoke with a tongue. He has taken possession of the easy chair by the fire-side already. He took off his boots in the parlor, and desired me to see them taken care of. I'm desirous to know how his impudence affects my daughter; she will certainly be shocked at it.

[Enter MISS HARDCASTLE, plainly dressed.]

HARD. Well, my Kate, I see you have changed your dress as I bid you; and yet, I believe, there was no great occasion.

MISS HARD. I find such a pleasure, sir, in obeying your commands that I take care to observe them without ever debating their propriety.

HARD. And yet, Kate, I sometimes give you some cause, particularly when I recommended my *modest* gentleman to you as a lover to-day.

MISS HARD. You taught me to expect something extraordinary, and I find the original exceeds the description.

HARD. I was never so surprised in my life! He has quite confounded all my faculties!

MISS HARD. I never saw anything like it—and a man of the world too!

HARD. Aye, he learned it all abroad. What a fool was I, to think a young man could learn modesty by travelling! He might as soon learn wit at a masquerade.

MISS HARD. It seems all natural to him.

HARD. A good deal assisted by bad company and a French dancing-master.

MISS HARD. Sure you mistake, papa! A French dancing-master could never have taught him that timid look—that

awkward address—that bashful manner—

HARD. Whose look? whose manner, child?

MISS HARD. Mr. Marlow's; his *mauvaise honte*,²⁴ his timidity, struck me at the first sight.

HARD. Then your first sight deceived you, for I think him one of the most brazen first sights that ever astonished my senses.

MISS HARD. Sure, sir, you rally! I never saw anyone so modest.

HARD. And can you be serious? I never saw such a bouncing, swaggering puppy since I was born. Bully Dawson²⁵ was but a fool to him.

MISS HARD. Surprising! He met me with a respectful bow, a stammering voice, and a look fixed on the ground.

HARD. He met me with a loud voice, a lordly air, and a familiarity that made my blood freeze again.

MISS HARD. He treated me with diffidence and respect; censured the manners of the age; admired the prudence of girls that never laughed; tired me with apologies for being tiresome; then left the room with a bow and "Madam, I would not for the world detain you."

HARD. He spoke to me as if he knew me all his life before; asked twenty questions, and never waited for an answer; interrupted my best remarks with some silly pun; and when I was in my best story of the Duke of Marlborough and Prince Eugene, he asked if I had not a good hand at making punch. Yes, Kate, he asked your father if he was a maker of punch!

MISS HARD. One of us must certainly be mistaken.

HARD. If he be what he has shown himself, I'm determined he shall never have my consent.

MISS HARD. And if he be the sullen thing I take him, he shall never have mine.

HARD. In one thing then we are agreed—to reject him.

MISS HARD. Yes; but upon condi-

tions. For if you should find him less impudent, and I more presuming—if you find him more respectful, and I more importunate—I don't know—the fellow is well enough for a man. Certainly we don't meet many such at a horse-race in the country.

HARD. If we should find him so—but that's impossible. The first appearance has done my business; I'm seldom deceived in that.

MISS HARD. And yet there may be many good qualities under that first appearance.

HARD. Aye, when a girl finds a fellow's outside to her taste, she then sets about guessing the rest of his furniture. With her, a smooth face stands for good sense and a genteel figure for every virtue.

MISS HARD. I hope, sir, a conversation begun with a compliment to my good sense won't end with a sneer at my understanding!

HARD. Pardon me, Kate. But if young Mr. Brazen can find the art of reconciling contradictions, he may please us both perhaps.

MISS HARD. And as one of us must be mistaken, what if we go to make further discoveries?

HARD. Agreed. But depend on't I'm in the right.

MISS HARD. And depend on't I'm not much in the wrong. [*Exeunt.*]

[*Enter TONY, running in with a casket.*]

TONY. Ecod! I have got them. Here they are. My cousin Con's necklaces, bobs²⁶ and all. My mother shan't cheat the poor souls out of their fortin neither.—O! my genius, is that you?

[*Enter HASTINGS.*]

HAST. My dear friend, how have you managed with your mother? I hope you have amused her with pretending love for your cousin, and that you are willing to be reconciled at last? Our horses will be refreshed in a short time, and we shall soon be ready to set off.

²⁶ pendants.

²⁴ embarrassment.

²⁵ a notorious London thug.

TONY. And here's something to bear your charges by the way [*giving the casket*].—your sweetheart's jewels. Keep them, and hang those, I say, that would rob you of one of them.

HAST. But how have you procured them from your mother?

TONY. Ask me no questions and I'll tell you no fibs. I procured them by the rule of thumb. If I had not a key to every drawer in mother's bureau, how could I go to the ale-house so often as I do? An honest man may rob himself of his own at any time.

HAST. Thousands do it every day. But to be plain with you, Miss Neville is endeavoring to procure them from her aunt this very instant. If she succeeds, it will be the most delicate way at least of obtaining them.

TONY. Well, keep them till you know how it will be. But I know how it will be well enough; she'd as soon part with the only sound tooth in her head.

HAST. But I dread the effects of her resentment when she finds she has lost them.

TONY. Never you mind her resentment; leave *me* to manage that. I don't value her resentment the bounce of a cracker.—Zounds! here they are. Morrice! Prance! [*Exit HASTINGS.*]

[*Enter MRS. HARDCASTLE and MISS NEVILLE.*]

MRS. HARD. Indeed, Constance, you amaze me. Such a girl as you want jewels? It will be time enough for jewels, my dear, twenty years hence, when your beauty begins to want repairs.

MISS N. But what will repair beauty at forty, will certainly improve it at twenty, madam.

MRS. HARD. Yours, my dear, can admit of none. That natural blush is beyond a thousand ornaments. Besides, child, jewels are quite out at present. Don't you see half the ladies of our acquaintance, my Lady Kill-daylight, and Mrs. Crump, and the rest of them, carry their jewels to town and

bring nothing but paste and marcasites²⁷ back?

MISS N. But who knows, madam, but somebody that shall be nameless would like me best with all my finery about me?

MRS. HARD. Consult your glass, my dear, and then see if, with such a pair of eyes, you want any better sparklers.—What do you think, Tony, my dear? Does your cousin Con want any jewels in your eyes to set off her beauty?

TONY. That's as thereafter may be.

MISS N. My dear aunt, if you knew how it would oblige me!

MRS. HARD. A parcel of old-fashioned rose and table-cut things! They would make you look like the court of King Solomon at a puppet-show. Besides, I believe, I can't readily come at them. They may be missing for aught I know to the contrary.

TONY [*apart to MRS. HARDCASTLE.*] Then why don't you tell her so at once, as she's so longing for them? Tell her they're lost. It's the only way to quiet her. Say they're lost, and call me to bear witness.

MRS. HARD. [*apart to TONY.*] You know, my dear, I'm only keeping them for you. So if I say they're gone, you'll bear me witness, will you? He! he! he!

TONY. Never fear me. Ecod! I'll say I saw them taken out with my own eyes.

MISS N. I desire them but for a day, madam—just to be permitted to show them as relics, and then they may be locked up again.

MRS. HARD. To be plain with you, my dear Constance, if I could find them you should have them. They're missing, I assure you—lost, for aught I know. But we must have patience, wherever they are.

MISS N. I'll not believe it! this is but a shallow pretence to deny me. I know they are too valuable to be so slightly kept, and as you are to answer for the loss—

MRS. HARD. Don't be alarmed, Con—
"cheap mineral ornaments.

stance. If they be lost, I must restore an equivalent. But my son knows they are missing and not to be found.

TONY. That I can bear witness to. They are missing and not to be found; I'll take my oath on't.

MRS. HARD. You must learn resignation, my dear; for though we lose our fortune, yet we should not lose our patience. See me, how calm I am.

MISS N. Aye, people are generally calm at the misfortunes of others.

MRS. HARD. Now I wonder a girl of your good sense should waste a thought upon such trumpery. We shall soon find them, and in the meantime you shall make use of my garnets till your jewels be found.

MISS N. I detest garnets.

MRS. HARD. The most becoming things in the world to set off a clear complexion. You have often seen how well they look upon me. You *shall* have them. [Exit.]

MISS N. I dislike them of all things. You shan't stir.—Was ever anything so provoking, to mislay my own jewels and force me to wear her trumpery?

TONY. Don't be a fool. If she gives you the garnets, take what you can get. The jewels are your own already. I have stolen them out of her bureau, and she does not know it. Fly to your spark; he'll tell you more of the matter. Leave me to manage her.

MISS N. My dear cousin!

TONY. Vanish! She's here, and has missed them already.

[Exit MISS NEVILLE.]

—Zounds! how she fidgets and snits about like a Catherine wheel!²⁸

[Enter MRS. HARDCASTLE.]

MRS. HARD. Confusion! thieves! robbers! we are cheated, plundered, broke open, undone!

TONY. What's the matter—what's the matter, mamma? I hope nothing has happened to any of the good family!

MRS. HARD. We are robbed! My

bureau has been broken open; the jewels taken out, and I'm undone.

TONY. Oh, is that all? Ha! ha! ha! By the laws, I never saw it acted better in my life! Ecod, I thought you was ruined in earnest, ha! ha! ha!

MRS. HARD. Why, boy, I *am* ruined in earnest. My bureau has been broken open and all taken away.

TONY. Stick to that—ha! ha! ha! stick to that. I'll bear witness, you know; call me to bear witness.

MRS. HARD. I tell you, Tony, by all that's precious, the jewels are gone and I shall be ruined forever.

TONY. Sure, I know they are gone, and I'm to say so.

MRS. HARD. My dearest Tony, but hear me! They're gone, I say.

TONY. By the laws, mamma, you make me for to laugh—ha! ha! I know who took them well enough, ha! ha! ha!

MRS. HARD. Was there ever such a blockhead, that can't tell the difference between jest and earnest! I tell you I'm not in jest, booby.

TONY. That's right, that's right; you must be in a bitter passion, and then nobody will suspect either of us. I'll bear witness that they are gone.

MRS. HARD. Was there ever such a cross-grained brute, that won't hear me! Can you bear witness that you're no better than a fool? Was ever poor woman so beset with fools on one hand and thieves on the other!

TONY. I can bear witness to that.

MRS. HARD. Bear witness again, you blockhead you, and I'll turn you out of the room directly. My poor niece, what will become of *her*? Do you laugh, you unfeeling brute, as if you enjoyed my distress?

TONY. I can bear witness to that.

MRS. HARD. Do you insult me, monster? I'll teach you to vex your mother, I will.

TONY. I can bear witness to that.

[He runs off; she follows him.]

[Enter MISS HARDCASTLE and MAID.]

MISS HARD. What an unaccountable creature is that brother of mine, to

²⁸ a rotating firework named from the martyrdom of St. Catherine on a spiked wheel.

send them to the house as an inn! ha! ha! I don't wonder at his impudence.

MAID. But what is more, madam, the young gentleman, as you passed by in your present dress, asked me if you were the bar-maid. He mistook you for the bar-maid, madam.

MISS HARD. Did he? Then as I live, I'm resolved to keep up the delusion. Tell me, Pimple, how do you like my present dress? Don't you think I look something like Cherry in the *Beaux' Stratagem*?

MAID. It's the dress, madam, that every lady wears in the country but when she visits or receives company.

MISS HARD. And are you sure he does not remember my face or person? MAID. Certain of it.

MISS HARD. I vow, I thought so; for, though we spoke for some time together, yet his fears were such that he never once looked up during the interview. Indeed, if he had, my bonnet would have kept him from seeing me.

MAID. But what do you hope of keeping him in his mistake?

MISS HARD. In the first place I shall be *seen*, and that is no small advantage to a girl who brings her face to market. Then I shall perhaps make an acquaintance, and that's no small victory gained over one who never addresses any but the wildest of her sex. But my chief aim is, to take my gentleman off his guard and, like an invisible champion of romance, examine the giant's force before I offer to combat.

MAID. But are you sure you can act your part and disguise your voice so that he may mistake that, as he has already mistaken your person?

MISS HARD. Never fear me. I think I have got the true bar cant—"Did your honor call?—Attend the Lion²⁹ there—Pipes and tobacco for the Angel.—The Lamb has been outrageous this half-hour."

MAID. It will do, madam.—But he's here. [Exit MAID.]

[Enter MARLOW.]

MAR. What a bawling in every part
²⁹ the name of a room in the imaginary inn.

of the house! I have scarce a moment's repose. If I go to the best room, there I find my host and his story; if I fly to the gallery, there we have my hostess with her curtesy down to the ground. I have at last got a moment to myself—and now for recollection.

[Walks and muses.]

MISS HARD. Did you call, sir? Did your honor call?

MAR. [musing.] As for Miss Hardcastle, she's too grave and sentimental for me.

MISS HARD. Did your honor call?

[She still places herself before him, he turning away.]

MAR. No, child. [musing.]—Besides, from the glimpse I had of her, I think she squints.

MISS HARD. I'm sure, sir, I heard the bell ring.

MAR. No, no. [musing.]—I have pleased my father, however, by coming down, and I'll to-morrow please myself by returning.

[Taking out his tablets, and perusing.]

MISS HARD. Perhaps the other gentleman called, sir?

MAR. I tell you no.

MISS HARD. I should be glad to know, sir. We have such a parcel of servants!

MAR. No, no, I tell you. [looks full in her face.] Yes, child, I think I did call. I wanted—I wanted—I vow, child, you are vastly handsome.

MISS HARD. O la, sir, you'll make one ashamed.

MAR. Never saw a more sprightly, malicious eye. Yes, yes, my dear, I did call. Have you any of your—a—what d'ye call it in the house?

MISS HARD. No, sir, we have been out of that these ten days.

MAR. One may call in this house, I find, to very little purpose. Suppose I should call for a taste, just by way of a trial, of the nectar of your lips; perhaps I might be disappointed in that too.

MISS HARD. Nectar?—nectar? That's a liquor there's no call for in these parts. French, I suppose. We keep no French wines here, sir.

MAR. Of true English growth, I assure you.

MISS HARD. Then it's odd I should not know it. We brew all sorts of wines in this house, and I have lived here these eighteen years.

MAR. Eighteen years! Why, one would think, child, you kept the bar before you were born. How old are you?

MISS HARD. O sir, I must not tell my age. They say women and music should never be dated.

MAR. To guess at this distance, you can't be much above forty. [*approaching.*—Yet, nearer, I don't think so much. [*approaching.* By coming close to some women they look younger still; but when we come very close indeed—

[*Attempting to kiss her.*]

MISS HARD. Pray, sir, keep your distance. One would think you wanted to know one's age as they do horses, by mark of mouth.

MAR. I protest, child, you use me extremely ill. If you keep me at this distance, how is it possible you and I can ever be acquainted?

MISS HARD. And who wants to be acquainted with you? I want no such acquaintance—not I. I'm sure you did not treat Miss Harcastle, that was here awhile ago, in this obstropicalous manner. I'll warrant me, before her you looked dashed, and kept bowing to the ground, and talked for all the world as if you was before a justice of peace.

MAR. [*aside.*] Egad, she has hit it, sure enough! [*to her.*] In awe of her, child? Ha! ha! ha!—A mere awkward, squinting thing! No, no! I find you don't know me. I laughed and rallied her a little, but I was unwilling to be too severe. No, I could not be too severe, *curse me!*

MISS HARD. O then, sir, you are a favorite, I find, among the ladies?

MAR. Yes, my dear, a great favorite. And yet, hang me, I don't see what they find in me to follow. At the Ladies' Club ³⁰ in town I'm called their "agree-

able Rattle." Rattle, child, is not my real name, but one I'm known by. My name is Solomons—Mr. Solomons, my dear, at your service.

[*Offering to salute her.*]

MISS HARD. Hold, sir; you are introducing me to your club, not to your self. And you're so great a favorite there, you say?

MAR. Yes, my dear. There's Mrs. Mantrap, Lady Betty Blackleg, the Countess of Sligo, Mrs. Langhorns, old Miss Biddy Buckskin, and your humble servant, keep up the spirit of the place.

MISS HARD. Then it's a very merry place, I suppose?

MAR. Yes, as merry as cards, supper, wine, and old women can make us.

MISS HARD. And their agreeable Rattle; ha! ha! ha!

MAR. [*aside.*] Egad! I don't quite like this chit. She looks knowing, methinks.—You laugh, child?

MISS HARD. I can't but laugh, to think what time they all have for minding their work or their family.

MAR. [*aside.*] All's well; she don't laugh at me. [*to her.*] Do you ever work, child?

MISS HARD. Aye, sure. There's not a screen or quilt in the whole house but what can bear witness to that.

MAR. Odso! then you must show me your embroidery. I embroider and draw patterns myself a little. If you want a judge of your work, you must apply to me. [*Seizing her hand.*]

MISS HARD. Aye, but the colors do not look well by candlelight. You shall see all in the morning. [*Struggling.*]

MAR. And why not now, my angel? Such beauty fires beyond the power of resistance.—Pshaw! the father here! My old luck: I never nicked seven that I did not throw aces ³¹ ace three times following. [*Exit MARLOW.*]

[*Enter HARCASTLE, who stands in surprise.*]

HARD. So, madam. So I find *this* is your *modest* lover! This is your humble admirer, that kept his eyes

³⁰ a London club which admitted men as well as women.

³¹ i.e. ambs-ace, both aces, the lowest throw at dice.

fixed on the ground and only adored at humble distance. Kate, Kate, art thou not ashamed to deceive your father so?

MISS HARD. Never trust me, dear papa, but he's still the modest man I first took him for; you'll be convinced of it as well as I.

HARD. By the hand of my body, I believe his impudence is infectious! Didn't I see him seize your hand? Didn't I see him haul you about like a milkmaid? And now you talk of his respect and his modesty, forsooth!

MISS HARD. But if I shortly convince you of his modesty, that he has only the faults that will pass off with time and the virtues that will improve with age, I hope you'll forgive him.

HARD. The girl would actually make one run mad!—I tell you, I'll not be convinced. I am convinced. He has scarce been three hours in the house, and he has already encroached on all my prerogatives. You may like his impudence and call it modesty, but my son-in-law, madam, must have very different qualifications.

MISS HARD. Sir, I ask but this night to convince you.

HARD. You shall not have half the time, for I have thoughts of turning him out this very hour.

MISS HARD. Give me that hour then, and I hope to satisfy you.

HARD. Well, an hour let it be then. But I'll have no trifling with your father. All fair and open—do you mind me?

MISS HARD. I hope, sir, you have ever found that I considered your commands as my pride, for your kindness is such that my duty as yet has been inclination. *[Exeunt.]*

ACT IV

The setting is the same

[Enter HASTINGS and MISS NEVILLE.]

HAST. You surprise me; Sir Charles Marlow expected here this night! Where have you had your information?

MISS N. You may depend upon it. I just saw his letter to Mr. Hardcastle, in which he tells him he intends setting out a few hours after his son.

HAST. Then, my Constance, all must be completed before he arrives. He knows me; and should he find me here, would discover my name, and perhaps my designs, to the rest of the family.

MISS N. The jewels, I hope, are safe?

HAST. Yes, yes; I have sent them to Marlow, who keeps the keys of our baggage. In the meantime I'll go to prepare matters for our elopement. I have had the Squire's promise of a fresh pair of horses, and if I should not see him again, will write him further directions. *[Exit.]*

MISS N. Well, success attend you. In the meantime I'll go and amuse my aunt with the old pretence of a violent passion for my cousin. *[Exit.]*

[Enter MARLOW, followed by a SERVANT.]

MAR. I wonder what Hastings could mean by sending me so valuable a thing as a casket to keep for him, when he knows the only place I have is the seat of a post-coach at an inn-door?—Have you deposited the casket with the landlady, as I ordered you? Have you put it into her own hands?

SERV. Yes, your honor.

MAR. She said she'd keep it safe, did she?

SERV. Yes, she said she'd keep it safe enough. She asked me how I came by it, and she said she had a great mind to make me give an account of myself.

[Exit SERVANT.]

MAR. Ha! ha! ha! They're safe, however. What an unaccountable set of beings have we got amongst! This little bar-maid, though, runs in my head most strangely, and drives out the absurdities of all the rest of the family. She's mine—she must be mine, or I'm greatly mistaken.

[Re-enter HASTINGS.]

HAST. Bless me! I quite forgot to tell her that I intended to prepare at

the bottom of the garden.—Marlow here, and in spirits too!

MAR. Give me joy, George. Crown me, shadow me with laurels! Well, George, after all, we modest fellows don't want for success among the women.

HAST. Some women, you mean. But what success has your honor's modesty been crowned with now, that it grows so insolent upon us?

MAR. Didn't you see the tempting, brisk, lovely little thing, that runs about the house with a bunch of keys to its girdle?

HAST. Well, and what then?

MAR. She's mine, you rogue you. Such fire, such motion, such eyes, such lips; but, egad! she would not let me kiss them, though.

HAST. But are you so sure, so very sure of her?

MAR. Why, man, she talked of showing me her work above stairs, and I am to improve the pattern.

HAST. But how can *you*, Charles, go about to rob a woman of her honor?

MAR. Pshaw! pshaw! We all know the honor of the bar-maid of an inn. I don't intend to *rob* her, take my word for it; there's nothing in this house I shan't honestly *pay* for.

HAST. I believe the girl has virtue.

MAR. And if she has, I should be the last man in the world that would attempt to corrupt it.

HAST. You have taken care, I hope, of the casket I sent you to lock up? Is it in safety?

MAR. Yes, yes. It's safe enough. I have taken care of it. But how could you think the seat of a post-coach at an inn-door a place of safety? Ah, numskull! I have taken better precautions for you than you did for yourself—I have—

HAST. What?

MAR. I have sent it to the landlady to keep for you.

HAST. —To the landlady!

MAR. The landlady.

HAST. You did?

MAR. I did. [She's to be answerable for its forthcoming, you know.

HAST. Yes, she'll bring it forth with a witness.

MAR. Wasn't I right? I believe you'll allow that I acted prudently upon this occasion.

HAST. [*aside.*] He must not see my uneasiness.

MAR. You seem a little disconcerted though, methinks. Sure, nothing has happened?

HAST. No, nothing. Never was in better spirits in all my life. And so you left it with the landlady, who no doubt very readily undertook the charge.

MAR. Rather too readily. For she not only kept the casket, but through her great precaution was going to keep the messenger too. Ha! ha! ha!

HAST. He! he! he! They're safe however?

MAR. As a guinea in a miser's purse.

HAST. [*aside.*] So now all hopes of fortune are at an end, and we must set off without it. [*to him.*] Well, Charles, I'll leave you to your meditations on the pretty bar-maid, and—he! he! he! may you be as successful for yourself as you have been for me!

[*Exit.*]

MAR. Thank ye, George; I ask no more.—Ha! ha! ha!

[*Enter* HARDCASTLE.]

HARD. I no longer know my own house. It's turned all topsy-turvy. His servants have got drunk already. I'll bear it no longer; and yet, from my respect for his father, I'll be calm. [*to him.*] Mr. Marlow, your servant. I'm your very humble servant.

[*Bowing low.*]

MAR. Sir, your humble servant. [*aside.*] What's to be the wonder now?

HARD. I believe, sir, you must be sensible, sir, that no man alive ought to be more welcome than your father's son, sir. I hope you think so?

MAR. I do, from my soul, sir. I don't want much entreaty. I generally make my father's son welcome wherever he goes.

HARD. I believe you do, from my

soul, sir. But tho' I say nothing to your own conduct, that of your servants is insufferable. Their manner of drinking is setting a very bad example in this house, I assure you.

MAR. I protest, my very good sir, that is no fault of mine. If they don't drink as they ought, *they* are to blame. I ordered them not to spare the cellar. I did, I assure you.—[*to the side scene.*] Here, let one of my servants come up!—[*to him.*] My positive directions were, that as I did not drink myself, they should make up for my deficiencies below.

HARD. Then they had your orders for what they do? I'm satisfied!

MAR. They had, I assure you. You shall hear from one of themselves.

[*Enter SERVANT, drunk.*]

MAR. You, Jeremy! Come forward, sirrah! What were my orders? Were you not told to drink freely and call for what you thought fit, for the good of the house?

HARD. [*aside.*] I begin to lose my patience.

JERE. Please, your honor, liberty and Fleet Street forever! Tho' I'm but a servant, I'm as good as another man. I'll drink for no man before supper, sir, dammy! Good liquor will sit upon a good supper, but a good supper will not sit upon—hiccup—upon my conscience, sir.

MAR. You see, my old friend, the fellow is as drunk as he can possibly be. I don't know what you'd have more, unless you'd have the poor devil soused in a beer-barrel.

HARD. [*aside.*] Zounds! he'll drive me distracted if I contain myself any longer!—Mr. Marlow!—Sir, I have submitted to your insolence for more than four hours, and I see no likelihood of its coming to an end. I'm now resolved to be master here, sir, and I desire that you and your drunken pack may leave my house directly.

MAR. Leave your house!—Sure you jest, my good friend! What, when I'm doing what I can to please you?

HARD. I tell you, sir, you don't

please me; so I desire you'll leave my house.

MAR. Sure, you cannot be serious! at this time o' night, and such a night? You only mean to banter me.

HARD. I tell you, sir, I'm serious! and now that my passions are roused, I say this house is mine, sir; this house is mine, and I command you to leave it directly.

MAR. Ha! ha! ha! A puddle in a storm. I shan't stir a step, I assure you. [*in a serious tone.*] This your house, fellow! It's my house. This is my house—mine, while I choose to stay. What right have you to bid me leave this house, sir? I never met with such impudence, curse me!—never in my whole life before.

HARD. Nor I, confound me if ever I did. To come to my house, to call for what he likes, to turn me out of my own chair, to insult the family, to order his servants to get drunk, and then to tell me, "This house is mine, sir!" By all that's impudent, it makes me laugh. Ha! ha! ha! Pray, sir [*bantering*], as you take the house, what think you of taking the rest of the furniture? There's a pair of silver candlesticks, and there's a fire-screen, and here's a pair of brazen-nosed bellows; perhaps you may take a fancy to them?

MAR. Bring me your bill, sir; bring me your bill, and let's make no more words about it.

HARD. There are a set of prints, too. What think you of the *Rake's Progress*,³² for your own apartment?

MAR. Bring me your bill, I say, and I'll leave you and your infernal house directly.

HARD. Then there's a mahogany table that you may see your own face in.

MAR. My bill, I say!

HARD. I had forgot the great chair for your own particular slumbers after a hearty meal.

MAR. Zounds! bring me my bill, I say, and let's hear no more on't.

HARD. Young man, young man, from your father's letter to me I was

³²a famous series by Hogarth.

taught to expect a well-bred, modest man as a visitor here, but now I find him no better than a coxcomb and a bully; but he will be down here presently, and shall hear more of it. [*Exit.*]

MAR. How's this? Sure I have not mistaken the house! Everything looks like an inn. The servants cry, "Coming!" the attendance is awkward; the bar-maid, too, to attend us.—But she's here, and will further inform me.—Whither so fast, child? A word with you.

[*Enter MISS HARDCASTLE.*]

MISS HARD. Let it be short, then. I'm in a hurry. [*aside.*] I believe he begins to find out his mistake, but it's too soon quite to undeceive him.

MAR. Pray, child, answer me one question. What are you, and what may your business in this house be?

MISS HARD. A relation of the family, sir.

MAR. What, a poor relation?

MISS HARD. Yes, sir; a poor relation, appointed to keep the keys, and to see that the guests want nothing in my power to give them.

MAR. That is, you act as the bar-maid of this inn.

MISS HARD. Inn! Oh, law—what brought that in your head? One of the best families in the country keep an inn!—Ha! ha! ha! old Mr. Hardcastle's house an inn!

MAR. Mr. Hardcastle's house! Is this Mr. Hardcastle's house, child?

MISS HARD. Aye, sure! Whose else should it be?

MAR. So then, all's out, and I have been damnably imposed on. Oh, confound my stupid head, I shall be laughed at over the whole town. I shall be stuck up in caricatura in all the print-shops. The *Dullissimo Macaroni*.²² To mistake this house of all others for an inn, and my father's old friend for an innkeeper! What a swaggering puppy must he take me for! What a silly puppy do I find myself! There again, may I be hanged, my

dear, but I mistook you for the bar-maid.

MISS HARD. Dear me! dear me! I'm sure there's nothing in my *behavior* to put me on a level with one of that stamp.

MAR. Nothing, my dear, nothing. But I was in for a list of blunders and could not help making you a subscriber. My stupidity saw everything the wrong way. I mistook your assiduity for assurance, and your simplicity for allurements. But it's over; this house I no more show my face in.

MISS HARD. I hope, sir, I have done nothing to disoblige you. I'm sure I should be sorry to affront any gentleman who has been so polite and said so many civil things to me. I'm sure I should be sorry [*pretending to cry*] if he left the family upon my account. I'm sure I should be sorry people said anything amiss, since I have no fortune but my character.

MAR. [*aside.*] By Heaven! she weeps. This is the first mark of tenderness I ever had from a modest woman, and it touches me. [*to her.*] Excuse me, my lovely girl; you are the only part of the family I leave with reluctance. But to be plain with you, the difference of our birth, fortune, and education, makes an honorable connection impossible; and I can never harbor a thought of seducing simplicity that trusted in my honor, of bringing ruin upon one whose only fault was being too lovely.

MISS HARD. [*aside.*] Generous man! I now begin to admire him. [*to him.*] But I am sure my family is as good as Miss Hardcastle's; and though I'm poor, that's no great misfortune to a contented mind; and, until this moment, I never thought that it was bad to want a fortune.

MAR. And why now, my pretty simplicity?

MISS HARD. Because it puts me at a distance from one that, if I had a thousand pounds, I would give it all to.

MAR. [*aside.*] This simplicity bewitches me so, that if I stay, I'm undone. I must make one bold effort and

²² a *macaroni* was a fop.

leave her. [*to her.*] Your partiality in my favor, my dear, touches me most sensibly, and were I to live for myself alone, I could easily fix my choice. But I owe too much to the opinion of the world, too much to the authority of a father; so that—I can scarcely speak it—it affects me. Farewell. [*Exit.*]

MISS HARD. I never knew half his merit till now. He shall not go if I have power or art to detain him. I'll still preserve the character in which I stooped to conquer, but will undeceive my papa, who perhaps may laugh him out of his resolution. [*Exit.*]

[*Enter TONY and MISS NEVILLE.*]

TONY. Aye, you may steal for yourselves the next time. I have done my duty. She has got the jewels again, that's a sure thing; but she believes it was all a mistake of the servants.

MISS N. But, my dear cousin, sure you won't forsake us in this distress? If she in the least suspects that I am going off, I shall certainly be locked up, or sent to my aunt Pedigree's, which is ten times worse.

TONY. To be sure, aunts of all kinds are damned bad things. But what can I do? I have got you a pair of horses that will fly like Whistle-jacket; and I'm sure you can't say but I have courted you nicely before her face.—Here she comes; we must court a bit or two more, for fear she should suspect us. [*They retire and seem to fondle.*]

[*Enter MRS. HARDCASTLE.*]

MRS. HARD. Well, I was greatly flattered, to be sure. But my son tells me it was all a mistake of the servants. I shan't be easy, however, till they are fairly married, and then let her keep her own fortune. But what do I see? fondling together, as I'm alive. I never saw Tony so sprightly before.—Ah! have I caught you, my pretty doves? What, billing, exchanging stolen glances and broken murmurs? Ah!

TONY. As for murmurs, mother, we grumble a little now and then, to be sure. But there's no love lost between us.

MRS. HARD. A mere sprinkling, Tony, upon the flame, only to make it burn brighter.

MISS N. Cousin Tony promises to give us more of his company at home. Indeed, he shan't leave us any more. It won't leave us, cousin Tony, will it?

TONY. Oh, it's a pretty creature. No, I'd sooner leave my horse in a pound than leave you when you smile upon one so. Your laugh makes you so becoming.

MISS N. Agreeable cousin! Who can help admiring that natural humor, that pleasant, broad, red, thoughtless [*patting his cheek.*—ah! it's a bold face.

MRS. HARD. Pretty innocence!

TONY. I'm sure I always loved cousin Con's hazel eyes, and her pretty long fingers, that she twists this way and that over the haspicholls like a parcel of bobbins.

MRS. HARD. Ah! he would charm the bird from the tree. I was never so happy before. My boy takes after his father, poor Mr. Lumpkin, exactly.—The jewels, my dear Con, shall be yours incontinently. You shall have them. Isn't he a sweet boy, my dear? You shall be married to-morrow, and we'll put off the rest of his education, like Dr. Drowsy's sermons, to a fitter opportunity.

[*Enter DIGGORY.*]

DIG. Where's the 'squire? I have got a letter for your worship.

TONY. Give it to my mamma. She reads all my letters first.

DIG. I had orders to deliver it into your own hands.

TONY. Who does it come from?

DIG. Your worship mun ask that o' the letter itself.

TONY. I could wish to know tho'.

[*Turning the letter and gazing on it.*]

MISS N. [*aside.*] Undone! undone! A letter to him from Hastings. I know the hand. If my aunt sees it, we are ruined forever. I'll keep her employed a little if I can. [*to MRS. HARDCASTLE.*] But I have not told you, madam, of my

cousin's smart answer just now to Mr. Marlow. We so laughed!—You must know, madam—this way a little, for he must not hear us: [They confer.]

TONY. [still gazing.] A damned cramp piece of penmanship as ever I saw in my life. I can read your print hand very well; but here are such handles and shanks and dashes that one can scarce tell the head from the tail.—“To Anthony Lumpkin, Esquire.” It's very odd; I can read the outside of my letters, where my own name is, well enough, but when I come to open it, it's all—buzz! That's hard, very hard; for the inside of the letter is always the cream of the correspondence.

MRS. HARD. Ha! ha! ha! Very well, very well. And so my son was too hard for the philosopher?

MISS N. Yes, madam; but you must hear the rest, madam. A little more this way, or he may hear us. You'll hear how he puzzled him again.

MRS. HARD. He seems strangely puzzled now himself, methinks.

TONY. [still gazing.] A' damned up and down hand, as if it was disguised in liquor.—[reading.] “Dear Sir,”—aye, that's that. Then there's an M, and a T, and an S, but whether the next be an izzard, or an R, confound me, I cannot tell.

MRS. HARD. What's that, my dear? Can I give you any assistance?

MISS N. Pray, aunt, let me read it. Nobody reads a cramp hand better than I. [twitching the letter from him.] Do you know who it is from?

TONY. Can't tell, except from Dick Ginger, the feeder.³⁴

MISS N. Aye, so it is. [pretending to read.] Dear 'Squire, hoping that you're in health, as I am at this present. The gentlemen of the Shake-bag club has cut the gentlemen of the Goose-green quite out of feather. The odds—um—odd battle—um—long fighting—um—here, here, it's all about cocks and fighting; it's of no consequence. Here, put it up, put it up!

[Thrusting the crumpled letter upon him.]

³⁴ a trainer of fighting-cocks.

TONY. But I tell you, miss, it's of all the consequence in the world. I would not lose the rest of it for a guinea. Here, mother, do you make it out. Of no consequence!

[Giving] MRS. HARD. CASTLE the letter.

MRS. HARD. How's this?—[reads.] “Dear 'Squire, I'm now waiting for Miss Neville, with a post-chaise and pair, at the bottom of the garden, but I find my horses yet unable to perform the journey. I expect you'll assist us with a pair of fresh horses, as you promised. Dispatch is necessary, as the hag (aye, the hag), your mother, will otherwise suspect us! Yours, Hastings.”—Grant me patience. I shall run distracted! My rage chokes me!

MISS N. I hope, madam, you'll suspend your resentment for a few moments, and not impute to me any impertinence or sinister design that belongs to another.

MRS. HARD. [curtseying very low.] Fine spoken, madam; you are most miraculously polite and engaging, and quite the very pink of courtesy and circumspection, madam. [changing her tone.] And you, you great ill-fashioned oaf, with scarce sense enough to keep your mouth shut—were you too joined against me? But I'll defeat all your plots in a moment.—As for you, madam, since you have got a pair of fresh horses ready, it would be cruel to disappoint them. So, if you please, instead of running away with your spark prepare this very moment to run off with me. Your old aunt Pedigree will keep you secure; I'll warrant me.—You too, sir, may mount your horse and guard us upon the way. Here, Thomas, Roger, Diggory! I'll show you that I wish you better than you do yourselves. [Exit.]

MISS N. So now I'm completely ruined!

TONY. Aye, that's a sure thing.

MISS N. What better could be expected from being connected with such a stupid fool—and after all the nods and signs I made him!

TONY. By the laws, miss, it was

your own cleverness, and not my stupidity, that did your business. You were so nice and so busy with your Shake-bags and Goose-greens, that I thought you could never be making believe.

[Enter HASTINGS.]

HAST. So, sir, I find by my servant that you have shown my letter and betrayed us. Was this well done, young gentleman?

TONY. Here's another. Ask miss there who betrayed you. Ecod, it was her doing, not mine.

[Enter MARLOW.]

MAR. So I have been finely used here among you!—rendered contemptible, driven into ill manners, despised, insulted, laughed at.

TONY. Here's another. We shall have old Bedlam broke loose presently.

MISS N. And there, sir, is the gentleman to whom we all owe every obligation.

MAR. What can I say to him—a mere boy, an idiot, whose ignorance and age are a protection?

HAST. A poor contemptible booby, that would but disgrace correction.

MISS N. Yet with cunning and malice enough to make himself merry with all our embarrassments.

HAST. An insensible cub.

MAR. Replete with tricks and mischief.

TONY. Baw! damme, but I'll fight you both, one after the other—with baskets.³⁵

MAR. As for him, he's below resentment.—But your conduct, Mr. Hastings, requires an explanation. You knew of my mistakes, yet would not undeceive me.

HAST. Tortured as I am with my own disappointments, is this a time for explanations? It is not friendly, Mr. Marlow.

MAR. But, sir—

MISS N. Mr. Marlow, we never kept on your mistake till it was too late to undeceive you. Be pacified.

³⁵ single-sticks with basket hilts.

[Enter SERVANT.]

SERV. My mistress desires you'll get ready immediately, madam. The horses are putting to. Your hat and things are in the next room. We are to go thirty miles before morning.

[Exit SERVANT.]

MISS N. Well, well; I'll come presently.

MAR. [to HASTINGS.] Was it well done, sir, to assist in rendering me ridiculous? to hang me out for the scorn of all my acquaintance? Depend upon it, sir, I shall expect an explanation.

HAST. Was it well done, sir, if you're upon that subject, to deliver what I entrusted to yourself to the care of another, sir?

MISS N. Mr. Hastings! Mr. Marlow! Why will you increase my distress by this groundless dispute? I implore, I entreat you—

[Enter SERVANT.]

SERV. Your cloak, madam. My mistress is impatient. [Exit SERVANT.]

MISS N. I come. Pray be pacified; if I leave you thus, I shall die with apprehension.

[Enter SERVANT.]

SERV. Your fan, muff, and gloves, madam. The horses are waiting.

MISS N. O Mr. Marlow! if you knew what a scene of constraint and ill-nature lies before me, I'm sure it would convert your resentment into pity.

MAR. I'm so distracted with a variety of passions that I don't know what I do.—Forgive me, madam. George, forgive me. You know my hasty temper, and should not exasperate it.

HAST. The torture of my situation is my only excuse.

MISS N. Well, my dear Hastings, if you have that esteem for me that I think, that I am sure, you have, your constancy for three years will but increase the happiness of our future connection. If—

MRS. HARD. [within.] Miss Neville! Constance—why Constance; I say!

MISS N. I'm coming. Well, constancy; remember, constancy is the word. *[Exit.]*

HAST. My heart! how can I support this? To be so near happiness, and such happiness!

MAR. *[to TONY.]* You see now, young gentleman, the effects of your folly. What might be amusement to you is here disappointment, and even distress.

TONY. *[from a reverie.]* Ecod, I have hit it. It's here. Your hands! Yours and yours, my poor Sulky!—My boots there, ho!—Meet me two hours hence at the bottom of the garden; and if you don't find Tony Lumpkin a more good-natured fellow than you thought for, I'll give you leave to take my best horse and Bet Bouncer into the bargain.—Come along. My boots, ho!

[Exeunt.]

ACT V

SCENE I.

The setting is the same

[Enter HASTINGS and SERVANT.]

HAST. You saw the old lady and Miss Neville drive off, you say?

SERV. Yes, your honor. They went off in a post-coach, and the young 'squire went on horseback. They're thirty miles off by this time.

HAST. Then all my hopes are over.

SERV. Yes, sir. Old Sir Charles has arrived. He and the old gentleman of the house have been laughing at Mr. Marlow's mistake this half hour. They are coming this way.

HAST. Then I must not be seen. So now to my fruitless appointment at the bottom of the garden. This is about the time. *[Exeunt.]*

[Enter SIR CHARLES and HARDCASTLE.]

HARD. Ha! ha! ha! The peremptory tone in which he sent forth his sublime commands!

SIR C. And the reserve with which I suppose he treated all your advances.

HARD. And yet he might have seen

something in me above a common inn-keeper, too.

SIR C. Yes, Dick, but he mistook you for an uncommon innkeeper, ha! ha! ha!

HARD. Well, I'm in too good spirits to think of anything but joy. Yes, my dear friend, this union of our families will make our personal friendships hereditary; and though my daughter's fortune is but small—

SIR C. Why, Dick, will you talk of fortune to me? My son is possessed of more than a competence already, and can want nothing but a good and virtuous girl to share his happiness and increase it. If they like each other as you say they do—

HARD. If, man! I tell you they *do* like each other. My daughter as good as told me so.

SIR C. But girls are apt to flatter themselves, you know.

HARD. I saw him grasp her hand in the warmest manner myself; and here he comes to put you out of your *ifs*, I warrant him.

[Enter MARLOW.]

MAR. I come, sir, once more, to ask pardon for my strange conduct. I can scarce reflect on my insolence without confusion.

HARD. Tut, boy, a trifle! You take it too gravely. An hour or two's laughing with my daughter will set all to rights again. She'll never like you the worse for it.

MAR. Sir, I shall be always proud of her approbation.

HARD. Approbation is but a cold word, Mr. Marlow; if I am not deceived, you have something more than approbation thereabouts. You take me?

MAR. Really, sir, I have not that happiness.

HARD. Come, boy, I'm an old fellow, and know what's what as well as you that are younger. I know what has passed between you; but mum.

MAR. Sure, sir, nothing has passed between us but the most profound respect on my side and the most distant

reserve on hers. You don't think, sir, that my impudence has been passed upon all the rest of the family!

HARD. Impudence! No, I don't say that—not quite impudence—though girls like to be played with, and rumpled a little too, sometimes. But she has told no tales, I assure you.

MAR. I never gave her the slightest cause.

HARD. Well, well, I like modesty in its place well enough. But this is over-acting, young gentleman. You may be open. Your father and I will like you all the better for it.

MAR. May I die, sir, if I ever—

HARD. I tell you, she don't dislike you; and as I'm sure you like her—

MAR. Dear sir—I protest, sir—

HARD. I see no reason why you should not be joined as fast as the parson can tie you.

MAR. But hear me, sir—

HARD. Your father approves the match, I admire it; every moment's delay will be doing mischief. So—

MAR. But why won't you hear me? By all that's just and true, I never gave Miss Hardcastle the slightest mark of my attachment, or even the most distant hint to suspect me of affection. We had but one interview, and that was formal, modest, and uninteresting.

HARD. [*aside.*] This fellow's formal, modest impudence is beyond bearing.

SIR C. And you never grasped her hand, or made any protestations?

MAR. As Heaven is my witness, I came down in obedience to your commands. I saw the lady without emotion, and parted without reluctance. I hope you'll exact no further proofs of my duty, nor prevent me from leaving a house in which I suffer so many mortifications. [*Exit.*]

SIR C. I'm astonished at the air of sincerity with which he parted.

HARD. And I am astonished at the deliberate intrepidity of his assurance.

SIR C. I dare pledge my life and honor upon his truth.

HARD. Here comes my daughter,

and I would stake my happiness upon her veracity.

[*Enter MISS HARDCASTLE.*]

HARD. Kate! come hither, child. Answer us sincerely and without reserve; has Mr. Marlow made you any professions of love and affection?

MISS HARD. The question is very abrupt, sir. But since you require unreserved sincerity, I think he has.

HARD. [*to SIR CHARLES.*] You see.

SIR C. And pray, madam, have you and my son had more than one interview?

MISS HARD. Yes, several.

HARD. [*to SIR CHARLES.*] You see.

SIR C. But did he profess any attachment?

MISS HARD. A lasting one.

SIR C. Did he talk of love?

MISS HARD. Much, sir.

SIR C. Amazing! And all this formally?

MISS HARD. Formally.

HARD. Now, my friend, I hope you are satisfied.

SIR C. And how did he behave, madam?

MISS HARD. As most professed admirers do—said some civil things of my face, talked much of his want of merit and the greatness of mine, mentioned his heart, gave a short tragedy speech, and ended with pretended rapture.

SIR C. Now I'm perfectly convinced, indeed. I know his conversation among women to be modest and submissive. This forward, canting, ranting manner by no means describes him, and I am confident he never sat for the picture.

MISS HARD. Then what, sir, if I should convince you to your face of my sincerity? If you and my papa, in about half an hour, will place yourselves behind that screen, you shall hear him declare his passion to me in person.

SIR C. Agreed. And if I find him what you describe, all my happiness in him must have an end. [*Exit.*]

MISS HARD. And if you don't find

him what I describe—I fear my happiness must never have a beginning.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.

The Back of the Garden

[*Enter HASTINGS.*]

HAST. What an idiot am I, to wait here for a fellow who probably takes a delight in mortifying me! He never intended to be punctual, and I'll wait no longer.—What do I see? It is he! and perhaps with news of my Constance.

[*Enter TONY, booted and spattered.*]

HAST. My honest 'squire! I now find you a man of your word. This looks like friendship.

TONY. Aye, I'm your friend, and the best friend you have in the world if you knew but all. This riding by night, by the bye, is cursedly tiresome. It has shook me worse than the basket of a stage-coach.

HAST. But how? Where did you leave your fellow-travellers? Are they in safety? Are they housed?

TONY. Five and twenty miles in two hours and a half is no such bad driving. The poor beasts have smoked for it. Rabbit me, but I'd rather ride forty miles after a fox than ten with such varment!

HAST. Well, but where have you left the ladies? I die with impatience.

TONY. Left them! Why, where should I leave them but where I found them?

HAST. This is a riddle.

TONY. Riddle me this then. What's that goes round the house and round the house, and never touches the house?

HAST. I'm still astray.

TONY. Why, that's it, mon—I have led them astray. By jingo, there's not a pond or a slough within five miles of the place but they can tell the taste of.

HAST. Ha! ha! ha! I understand! you took them in a round while they supposed themselves going forward,

and so you have at last brought them home again.

TONY. You shall hear. I first took them down Feather-bed Lane, where we stuck fast in the mud. I then rattled them crack over the stones of Up-and-Down Hill. I then introduced them to the gibbet on Heavy-tree Heath; and from that, with a circum-bendibus, I fairly lodged them in the horse-pond at the bottom of the garden.

HAST. But no accident, I hope?

TONY. No, no. Only mother is profoundly frightened. She thinks herself forty miles off. She's sick of the journey, and the cattle can scarce crawl. So if your own horses be ready, you may whip off with cousin; and I'll be bound that no soul here can budge a foot to follow you.

HAST. My dear friend, how can I be grateful?

TONY. Aye, now it's "dear friend," noble 'squire. Just now, it was "all idiot," "cub," and "run me through the guts." Damn *your* way of fighting, I say. After we take a knock in this part of the country, we kiss and be friends. But if you had run me through the guts, then I should be dead and you might go kiss the hangman.

HAST. The rebuke is just. But I must hasten to relieve Miss Neville; if you keep the old lady employed, I promise to take care of the young one.

[*Exit HASTINGS.*]

TONY. Never fear me.—Here she comes. Vanish! She's got from the pond, and dragged up to the waist like a mermaid.

[*Enter MRS. HARDCASTLE.*]

MRS. HARD. Oh, Tony, I'm killed! Shook! Battered to death! I shall never survive it. That last jolt, that laid us against the quickset hedge, has done my business.

TONY. Alack, mamma, it was all your own fault. You would be for running away by night, without knowing one inch of the way.

MRS. HARD. I wish we were at home again. I never met so many accidents in so short a journey. Drenched in the

mud, overturned in a ditch, stuck fast in a slough, jolted to a jelly, and at last to lose our way! Whereabouts do you think we are, Tony?

TONY. By my guess we should be upon Crackskull common, about forty miles from home.

MRS. HARD. O lud! O lud! The most notorious spot in all the country. We only want a robbery to make a complete night on't.

TONY. Don't be afraid, mamma—don't be afraid. Two of the five that kept here are hanged, and the other three may not find us. Don't be afraid. —Is that a man that's galloping behind us? No; it's only a tree.—Don't be afraid.

MRS. HARD. The fright will certainly kill me.

TONY. Do you see anything like a black hat moving behind the thicket?

MRS. HARD. Oh, death!

TONY. No; it's only a cow. Don't be afraid, mamma; don't be afraid.

MRS. HARD. As I'm alive, Tony, I see a man coming towards us. Ah! I'm sure on't. If he perceives us, we are undone.

TONY. [*aside.*] Father-in-law, by all that's unlucky, come to take one of his night walks. [*to her.*] Ah, it's a highwayman with pistols as long as my arm. A damned ill-looking fellow.

MRS. HARD. Good Heaven defend us! He approaches.

TONY. Do you hide yourself in that thicket and leave me to manage him. If there be any danger, I'll cough and cry hem. When I cough, be sure to keep close.

[MRS. HARDCASTLE *hides behind a tree in the back scene.*]

[*Enter HARDCASTLE.*]

HARD. I'm mistaken or I heard voices of people in want of help.—Oh, Tony! is that you? I did not expect you so soon back. Are your mother and her charge in safety?

TONY. Very safe, sir, at my aunt Pedigree's.—Hem!

MRS. HARD. [*from behind.*] Ah, death! I find there's danger.

HARD. Forty miles in three hours? sure, that's too much, my youngster.

TONY. Stout horses and willing minds make short journeys, as they say.—Hem!

MRS. HARD. [*from behind.*] Sure he'll do the dear boy no harm!

HARD. But I heard a voice here; I should be glad to know from whence it came.

TONY. It was I, sir, talking to myself, sir. I was saying that forty miles in four hours was very good going.—Hem! As to be sure it was.—Hem! I have got a sort of cold by being out in the air. We'll go in, if you please.—Hem!

HARD. But if you talked to yourself, you did not answer yourself. I am certain I heard two voices, and am resolved [*raising his voice*] to find the other out.

MRS. HARD. [*from behind.*] Oh, he's coming to find me out. Oh!

TONY. What need you go, sir, if I tell you?—Hem! I'll lay down my life for the truth—hem!—I'll tell you all, sir. [*Detaining him.*]

HARD. I tell you I will not be detained. I insist on seeing. It's in vain to expect I'll believe you.

MRS. HARD. [*running forward from behind.*] O lud! he'll murder my poor boy, my darling! Here, good gentleman, whet your rage upon me. Take my money, my life, but spare that young gentleman; spare my child, if you have any mercy.

HARD. My wife, as I'm a Christian. From whence can she come? or what does she mean?

MRS. HARD. [*kneeling.*] Take compassion on us, good Mr. Highwayman. Take our money, our watches, all we have, but spare our lives! We will never bring you to justice; indeed we won't, good Mr. Highwayman.

HARD. I believe the woman's out of her senses. What, Dorothy, don't you know me?

MRS. HARD. Mr. Hardcastle, as I'm alive! My fears blinded me.—But who, my dear, could have expected to meet you here, in this frightful place,

so far from home? What has brought you to follow us?

HARD. Sure, Dorothy, you have not lost your wits? So far from home, when you are within forty yards of your own door!—[*to him.*] This is one of your old tricks, you graceless rogue, you. [*to her.*] Don't you know the gate, and the mulberry-tree? and don't you remember the horse-pond, my dear?

MRS. HARD. Yes, I shall remember the horse-pond as long as I live; I have caught my death in it. [*to TONY.*] And is it to you, you graceless varlet, I owe all this? I'll teach you to abuse your mother, I will.

TONY. Ecod, mother, all the parish says you have spoiled me, and so you may take the fruits on't.

MRS. HARD. I'll spoil you, I will!

[*Follows him off the stage.*
Exeunt.]

HARD. There's morality, however, in his reply. [*Exit.*]

[*Enter HASTINGS and MISS NEVILLE.*]

HAST. My dear Constance, why will you deliberate thus? If we delay a moment, all is lost forever. Pluck up a little resolution, and we shall soon be out of the reach of her malignity.

MISS N. I find it impossible. My spirits are so sunk with the agitations I have suffered that I am unable to face any new danger. Two or three years' patience will at last crown us with happiness.

HAST. Such a tedious delay is worse than inconstancy. Let us fly, my charmer. Let us date our happiness from this very moment. Perish fortune! Love and content will increase what we possess beyond a monarch's revenue. Let me prevail!

MISS N. No, Mr. Hastings, no. Prudence once more comes to my relief, and I will obey its dictates. In the moment of passion fortune may be despised, but it ever produces a lasting repentance. I'm resolved to apply to Mr. Hardcastle's compassion and justice for redress.

HAST. But though he had the will, he has not the power to relieve you.

MISS N. But he has influence, and upon that I am resolved to rely.

HAST. I have no hopes. But since you persist, I must reluctantly obey you. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.

The Living Room of HARDCASTLE'S House

[*Enter SIR CHARLES and MISS HARDCASTLE.*]

SIR C. What a situation am I in! If what you say appears, I shall then find a guilty son. If what he says be true, I shall then lose one that, of all others, I most wished for a daughter.

MISS HARD. I am proud of your approbation, and to show I merit it, if you place yourselves as I directed, you shall hear his explicit declaration. But he comes.

SIR C. I'll to your father and keep him to the appointment.

[*Exit SIR CHARLES.*]

[*Enter MARLOW.*]

MAR. Though prepared for setting out, I come once more to take leave; nor did I till this moment know the pain I feel in the separation.

MISS HARD. [*in her own natural manner.*] I believe these sufferings cannot be very great, sir, which you can so easily remove. A day or two longer, perhaps, might lessen your uneasiness, by showing the little value of what you now think proper to regret.

MAR. [*aside.*] This girl every moment improves upon me. [*to her.*] It must not be, madam. I have already trifled too long with my heart. My very pride begins to submit to my passion. The disparity of education and fortune, the anger of a parent, and the contempt of my equals, begin to lose their weight; and nothing can restore me to myself but this painful effort of resolution.

MISS HARD. Then go, sir; I'll urge nothing more to detain you. Though

my family be as good as hers you came down to visit, and my education, I hope, not inferior, what are these advantages without equal affluence? I must remain contented with the slight approbation of imputed merit; I must have only the mockery of your addresses, while all your serious aims are fixed on fortune.

[Enter **HARDCASTLE** and **SIR CHARLES** from behind.]

SIR C. Here, behind this screen.

HARD. Aye, aye; make no noise. I'll engage my Kate covers him with confusion at last.

MAR. By heavens, madam! fortune was ever my smallest consideration. Your beauty at first caught my eye, for who could see that without emotion? But every moment that I converse with you steals in some new grace, heightens the picture, and gives it stronger expression. What at first seemed rustic plainness, now appears refined simplicity. What seemed forward assurance, now strikes me as the result of courageous innocence and conscious virtue.

SIR C. What can it mean? He amazes me!

HARD. I told you how it would be. Hush!

MAR. I am now determined to stay, madam, and I have too good an opinion of my father's discernment, when he sees you, to doubt his approbation.

MISS HARD. No, Mr. Marlow, I will not, cannot, detain you. Do you think I could suffer a connection in which there is the smallest room for repentance? Do you think I would take the mean advantage of a transient passion to load you with confusion? Do you think I could ever relish that happiness which was acquired by lessening yours?

MAR. By all that's good, I can have no happiness but what's in your power to grant me! Nor shall I ever feel repentance but in not having seen your merits before. I will stay even contrary to your wishes; and tho' you should persist to shun me, I will make my respectful assiduities atone for the levity of my past conduct.

MISS HARD. Sir, I must entreat you'll desist. As our acquaintance began, so let it end—in indifference. I might have given an hour or two to levity; but seriously, Mr. Marlow, do you think I could ever submit to a connection where I must appear mercenary, and *you* imprudent? Do you think I could ever catch at the confident addresses of a secure admirer?

MAR. [kneeling.] Does this look like security? Does this look like confidence? No, madam, every moment that shows me your merit, only serves to increase my diffidence and confusion. Here let me continue—

SIR C. I can hold it no longer. [rushing forth.] Charles, Charles, how hast thou deceived me! Is this your indifference, your uninteresting conversation?

HARD. [following.] Your cold contempt, your formal interview! What have you to say now?

MAR. That I'm all amazement! What can it mean?

HARD. It means that you can say and unsay things at pleasure; that you can address a lady in private and deny it in public; that you have one story for us and another for my daughter.

MAR. Daughter!—This lady your daughter?

HARD. Yes, sir, my only daughter—my Kate. Whose else should she be?

MAR. Oh, the devil!

MISS HARD. Yes, sir, that very identical, tall, squinting lady you were pleased to take me for [curtseying]—she that you addressed as the mild, modest, sentimental man of gravity, and the bold, forward, agreeable Rattle of the Ladies' Club. Ha! ha! ha!

MAR. Zounds! there's no bearing this; it's worse than death!

MISS HARD. In which of your characters, sir, will you give us leave to address you—as the faltering gentleman, with looks on the ground, that speaks just to be heard and hates hypocrisy, or the loud, confident creature that keeps it up with Mrs. Mantrap and old Miss Biddy Buckskin till three in the morning? Ha! ha! ha!

MAR. Oh, curse on my noisy head. I never attempted to be impudent yet, that I was not taken down. I must be gone.

HARD. By the hand of my body, but you shall not. I see it was all a mistake, and I am rejoiced to find it. You shall not, sir, I tell you. I know she'll forgive you. Won't you forgive him, Kate? We'll all forgive you. Take courage, man.

[*They retire, she tormenting him, to the back scene.*]

[*Enter MRS. HARDCASTLE and TONY.*]

MRS. HARD. So, so, they're gone off. Let them go; I care not.

HARD. Who gone?

MRS. HARD. My dutiful niece and her gentleman, Mr. Hastings, from town—he who came down with our modest visitor here.

SIR C. Who, my honest George Hastings? As worthy a fellow as lives, and the girl could not have made a more prudent choice.

HARD. Then, by the hand of my body, I'm proud of the connection.

MRS. HARD. Well, if he has taken away the lady, he has not taken her fortune; that remains in this family to console us for her loss.

HARD. Sure, Dorothy, you would not be so mercenary!

MRS. HARD. Aye, that's my affair, not yours.

HARD. But you know if your son, when of age, refuses to marry his cousin, her whole fortune is then at her own disposal.

MRS. HARD. Aye, but he's not of age, and she has not thought proper to wait for his refusal.

[*Enter HASTINGS and MISS NEVILLE.*]

MRS. HARD. [*aside.*] What, returned so soon! I begin not to like it.

HAST. [*to HARDCASTLE.*] For my late attempt to fly off with your niece, let my present confusion be my punishment. We are now come back to appeal from your justice to your humanity. By her father's consent I first

paid her my addresses, and our passions were first founded in duty.

MISS N. Since his death I have been obliged to stoop to dissimulation to avoid oppression. In an hour of levity I was ready to give up my fortune to secure my choice. But I am now recovered from the delusion, and hope from your tenderness what is denied me from a nearer connection.

MRS. HARD. Pshaw, pshaw! this is all but the whining end of a modern novel.

HARD. Be it what it will, I'm glad they're come back to reclaim their due.—Come hither, Tony, boy. Do you refuse this lady's hand whom I now offer you?

TONY. What signifies my refusing? You know I can't refuse her till I'm of age, father.

HARD. While I thought concealing your age, boy, was likely to conduce to your improvement, I concurred with your mother's desire to keep it secret. But since I find she turns it to a wrong use, I must now declare you have been of age these three months.

TONY. Of age! Am I of age, father?

HARD. Above three months.

TONY. Then you'll see the first use I'll make of my liberty. [*taking Miss NEVILLE's hand.*] Witness all men by these presents that I, Anthony Lumpkin, Esquire, of BLANK place, refuse you, Constantia Neville, spinster, of no place at all, for my true and lawful wife. So Constance Neville may marry whom she pleases, and Tony Lumpkin is his own man again.

SIR C. O brave squire!

HAST. My worthy friend!

MRS. HARD. My undutiful offspring!

MAR. Joy, my dear George! I give you joy sincerely. And could I prevail upon my little tyrant here to be less arbitrary, I should be the happiest man alive if you would return me the favor.

HAST. [*to MISS HARDCASTLE.*] Come, madam, you are now driven to the very last scene of all your contrivances. I know you like him, I'm sure he loves you, and you must and shall have him.

HARD. [*joining their hands.*] And I

say so too. And, Mr. Marlow, if she makes as good a wife as she has a daughter, I don't believe you'll ever repent your bargain. So now to supper! To-morrow we shall gather all the poor of the parish about us, and the Mistakes of the Night shall be crowned with a merry morning. So, boy, take her; and as you have been mistaken in the mistress, my wish is that you may never be mistaken in the wife.

[*Exeunt omnes.*]

EPILOGUE ³⁶

Well, having Stooped to Conquer with success,
And gained a husband without aid from dress,
Still as a bar-maid, I could wish it too,
As I have conquered him to conquer you;
And let me say, for all your resolution,
That pretty bar-maids have done execution.
Our life is all a play, composed to please;
"We have our exits and our entrances."
The first act shows the simple country maid,
Harmless and young, of everything afraid;
Blushes when hired, and with unmeaning action,
"I hopes as how to give you satisfaction."
Her second act displays a livelier scene,—
The unblushing bar-maid of a country inn,
Who whisks about the house, at market caters,
Talks loud, coquets the guests, and scolds the waiters.
Next the scene shifts to town, and there she soars,
The chop-house toast of ogling connoisseurs.

* spoken by Mrs. Bulkley, who played the part of Miss Hardcastle.

On squire's and cits she there displays her arts,
And on the gridiron broils her lovers' hearts—
And as she smiles, her triumphs to complete,
Even Common Councilmen forget to eat.
The fourth act shows her wedded to the Squire,
And madam now begins to hold it higher;
Pretends to taste, at opera cries "*Caro!*"
And quits her *Nancy Dawson*³⁷ for *Che faro*,³⁸
Dotes upon dancing, and in all her pride
Swims round the room, the Heinel³⁹ of Cheapside;
Ogles and leers with artificial skill,
Till having lost in age the power to kill,
She sits all night at cards and ogles at spadille.
Such, through our lives, the eventful history.
The fifth and last act still remains for me;
The bar-maid now for your protection prays,
Turns female barrister, and pleads for Bayes.⁴⁰

EPILOGUE ⁴¹

TO BE SPOKEN IN THE CHARACTER OF
TONY LUMPKIN

BY J. CRADDOCK, ESQ.

Well—now all's ended, and my comrades gone,
Pray, what becomes of mother's "nonly son"?
A hopeful blade, in town I'll fix my station
And try to make a bluster in the nation.

³⁷ a popular song.

³⁸ an aria in Gluck's *Orfeo* (1764).

³⁹ a Prussian dancer then in London.

⁴⁰ i.e. the dramatist.

⁴¹ this came too late to be spoken.

As for my cousin Neville, I renounce
her;
Off—in a crack—I'll carry Big Bet
Bouncer.
Why should I not in the great world
appear?
I soon shall have a thousand pounds a
year.
No matter what a man may here in-
herit,
In London, gad, they've some regard to
spirit.
I see the horses prancing up the streets,
And big Bet Bouncer bobs to all she
meets,
Then hikes to jigs and pastimes ev'ry
night—

Not to the play; they say it a'n't
polite;
To Sadler's Wells, perhaps, or operas
go,
And once, by chance, to the roratorio.
Thus here and there, forever up and
down,
We'll set the fashion, too, to half the
town;
And then, at auctions—money ne'er
regard;
Buy pictures like the great—ten pounds
a yard.
Zounds! we shall make these London
gentry say,
We know what's damned genteel as
well as they.

THE SCHOOL FOR SCANDAL

RICHARD BRINSLEY SHERIDAN

CHARACTERS

SIR PETER TEAZLE.
SIR OLIVER SURFACE.
JOSEPH SURFACE.
CHARLES SURFACE.
CRABTREE.
SIR BENJAMIN BACKBITE.
ROWLEY.
MOSES.
TRIP.
SNAKE.
CARELESS.
SIR HARRY BUMPER.

LADY TEAZLE.
MARIA.
LADY SNEERWELL.
MRS. CANDOUR.

Gentlemen, Maid, and Servants.

SCENE—London.
TIME—Contemporary.

A PORTRAIT

ADDRESSED TO MRS. CREWE,¹ WITH THE
COMEDY OF THE SCHOOL FOR SCANDAL

BY R. B. SHERIDAN, ESQ.

Tell me, ye prim adepts in Scandal's
school,
Who rail by precept and detract by
rule,
Lives there no character so tried, so
known,
So decked with grace, and so unlike
your own,
That even you assist her fame to raise,
Approve by envy, and by silence
praise!

¹ Mrs. Crewe was the daughter of Fulke Greville. She kept a salon at which political and literary topics were discussed.

Attend!—a model shall attract your
view—

Daughters of calumny, I summon you!
You shall decide if this a portrait prove,
Or fond creation of the Muse and Love.
Attend, ye virgin critics, shrewd and
sage,

Ye matron censors of this childish age,
Whose peering eye and wrinkled front
declare

A fixed antipathy to young and fair;
By cunning, cautious; or by nature,
cold,

In maiden madness, virulently bold!—
Attend, ye skilled to coin the precious
tale,

Creating proof, where innuendoes fail!
Whose practised memories, cruelly
exact,

Omit no circumstance, except the
fact!—

Attend, all ye who boast—or old or
young—

The living libel of a slanderous tongue!
So shall my theme as far contrasted be
As saints by fiends, or hymns by
calumny.

Come, gentle Amoret² (for 'neath that
name

In worthier verse is sung thy beauty's
fame);

Come—for but thee who seeks the
Muse?—and while

Celestial blushes check thy conscious
smile,

With timid grace and hesitating eye,
The perfect model, which I boast,
supply:

Vain Muse! couldst thou the humblest
sketch create

Of her, or slightest charm couldst imi-
tate—

² a name borrowed from Spenser, but used contemporaneously in Fox's verses for Mrs. Crewe.

Could thy blest strain in kindred colors
 trace
 The faintest wonder of her form and
 face—
 Poets would study the immortal line,
 And Reynolds own *his* art subdued by
 thine;
 That art, which well might added lustre
 give
 To Nature's best, and Heaven's super-
 lative:
 On Granby's³ cheek might bid new
 glories rise,
 Or point a purer beam from Devon's⁴
 eyes!
 Hard is the task to shape that beauty's
 praise,
 Whose judgment scorns the homage
 flattery pays!
 But praising Amoret we cannot err,
 No tongue o'ervalues Heaven or flatters
 her!
 Yet she by Fate's perverseness—she
 alone—
 Would doubt our truth, nor deem such
 praise her own.
 Adorning fashion, unadorned by
 dress,
 Simple from taste, and not from care-
 lessness;
 Discreet in gesture, in deportment
 mild,
 Not stiff with prudence, nor uncouthly
 wild:
 No state has Amoret; no studied
 mien;
 She frowns no *goddess*, and she moves
 no *queen*.
 The softer charm that in her manner
 lies
 Is framed to captivate, yet not sur-
 prise;
 It justly suits the expression of her
 face;
 'Tis less than dignity and more than
 grace!
 On her pure cheek the native hue is
 such
 That, formed by Heaven to be admired
 so much,
 The hand divine, with a less partial
 care,

Might well have fixed a fainter crim-
 son there
 And bade the gentle inmate of her
 breast—
 Inshrined Modesty—supply the rest.
 But who the peril of her lips shall
 paint?
 Strip them of smiles—still, still all
 words are faint,
 But moving Love himself appears to
 teach
 Their action, though denied to rule her
 speech;
 And thou who seest her speak and dost
 not hear,
 Mourn not her distant accents 'scape
 thine ear;
 Viewing those lips, thou still may'st
 make pretence
 To judge of what she says and swear
 'tis sense:
 Clothed with such grace, with such ex-
 pression fraught,
 They move in meaning and they pause
 in thought!
 But dost thou farther watch, with
 charmed surprise,
 The mild irresolution of her eyes,
 Curious to mark how frequent they re-
 pose
 In brief eclipse and momentary close—
 Ah! seest thou not an ambushed Cupid
 there,
 Too tim'rous of his charge, with jealous
 care
 Veils and unveils those beams of
 heav'nly light,
 Too full, too fatal else, for mortal sight?
 Nor yet, such pleasing vengeance fond
 to meet,
 In pard'ning dimples hope a safe re-
 treat.
 What though her peaceful breast should
 ne'er allow
 Subduing frowns to arm her altered
 brow,
 By Love, I swear, and by his gentle
 wiles,
 More fatal still the mercy of her
 smiles!
 Thus lovely, thus adorned, possessing
 all
 Of bright or fair that can to woman
 fall,

³ Marchioness of Granby.

⁴ Georgina, Duchess of Devonshire.

The height of vanity might well be
 thought
 Prerogative in her, and Nature's
 fault.
 Yet gentle Amoret, in mind supreme
 As well as charms, rejects the vainer
 theme;
 And, half mistrustful of her beauty's
 store,
 She bars with wit those darts too keen
 before:
 Read in all knowledge that her sex
 should reach,
 Though Greville,⁵ or the Muse, should
 deign to teach,
 Fond to improve, nor timorous to dis-
 cern
 How far it is a woman's grace to
 learn;
 In Millar's⁶ dialect she would not
 prove
 Apollo's priestess, but Apollo's love;
 Graced by those signs which truth de-
 lights to own—
 The timid blush and mild submitted
 tone:
 Whate'er she says, though sense appear
 throughout,
 Displays the tender hue of female
 doubt;
 Decked with that charm, how lovely
 wit appears,
 How graceful science when that robe
 she wears!
 Such too her talents and her bent of
 mind,
 As speak a sprightly heart by thought
 refined;
 A taste for mirth, by contemplation
 schooled,
 A turn for ridicule, by candor ruled,
 A scorn of folly, which she tries to
 hide;
 An awe of talent, which she owns with
 pride!
 Peace, idle Muse! no more thy strain
 prolong,
 But yield a theme thy warmest praises
 wrong;
 Just to her merit, though thou canst
 not raise

⁵ a reference to Mrs. Crewe's mother, to whom Sheridan dedicated *The Critic*.

⁶ Lady Millar conducted poetic contests at her salon in Bath.

Thy feeble verse, behold th'acknowl-
 edged praise
 Has spread conviction through the
 envious train,
 And cast a fatal gloom o'er Scandal's
 reign!
 And lo! each pallid hag, with blistered
 tongue,
 Mutters assent to all thy zeal has
 sung—
 Owns all the colors just—the outline
 true,
 Thee my inspirer and my model—
 CREWE!

PROLOGUE

WRITTEN BY MR. GARRICK

A School for Scandal! tell me, I be-
 seech you,
 Needs there a school this modish art to
 teach you?
 No need of lessons now, the knowing
 think;
 We might as well be taught to eat and
 drink.
 Caused by a dearth of scandal, should
 the vapors⁷
 Distress our fair ones—let them read
 the papers;
 Their powerful mixtures such disorders
 hit,
 Crave what you will—there's *quantum*
sufficit.⁸
 "Lord!" cries my Lady Wormwood
 (who loves tattle,
 And puts much salt and pepper in her
 prattle),
 Just ris'n at noon, all night at cards
 when threshing
 Strong tea and scandal—"Bless me,
 how refreshing!
 Give me the papers, Lisp—how bold
 and free! [Sips.]
Last night Lord L. [sips.] was caught
with Lady D.
 For aching heads what charming sal
 volatile! [Sips.]

⁷ the blues. ⁸ a sufficient quantity.

*If Mrs. B. will still continue flirting,
We hope she'll DRAW, or we'll UNDRAW
the curtain.*

Fine satire, poz^a—in public all abuse
it,

But, by ourselves [*sips*], our praise we
can't refuse it.

Now, Lisp, read you—there, at that
dash and star.”¹⁰

“Yes, ma'am: A certain lord had best
beware,

*Who lives not twenty miles from
Grosvenor Square;*¹¹

*For, should he Lady W. find willing,
Wormwood is bitter*”—“Oh! that's me!
the villain!

Throw it behind the fire, and never
more

Let that vile paper come within my
door.”

Thus at our friends we laugh, who feel
the dart;

To reach our feelings, we ourselves
must smart.

Is our young bard so young, to think
that he

Can stop the full spring-tide of
calumny?

Knows he the world so little, and its
trade?

Alas! the devil's sooner raised than
laid.

So strong, so swift, the monster there's
no gagging:

Cut Scandal's head off, still the tongue
is wagging.

Proud of your smiles once lavishly be-
stowed,

Again our young Don Quixote takes
the road;

To show his gratitude he draws his
pen,

And seeks this hydra, Scandal, in his
den.

For your applause all perils he would
through—

He'll fight—that's write—a cavalliero
true,

Till every drop of blood—that's ink—
is spilt for you.

^a positively.

¹⁰ In printing scandalous stories the papers
often gave only initials followed by a dash
or a row of asterisks.

¹¹ a fashionable part of London.

ACT I

SCENE I.

LADY SNEERWELL's House

[*Discovered, LADY SNEERWELL at
her dressing-table; SNAKE drink-
ing chocolate.*]

LADY S. The paragraphs, you say,
Mr. Snake, were all inserted?

SNAKE. They were, madam; and, as
I copied them myself in a feigned hand,
there can be no suspicion whence they
came.

LADY S. Did you circulate the report
of Lady Brittle's intrigue with Captain
Boastall?

SNAKE. That's in as fine a train as
your ladyship could wish. In the com-
mon course of things, I think it must
reach Mrs. Clackitt's ears within four-
and-twenty hours; and then, you know,
the business is as good as done.

LADY S. Why, truly, Mrs. Clackitt
has a very pretty talent, and a great
deal of industry.

SNAKE. True, madam, and has been
tolerably successful in her day. To my
knowledge, she has been the cause of
six matches being broken off and three
sons disinherited, of four forced elope-
ments and as many close confinements,
nine separate maintenances and two
divorces. Nay, I have more than once
traced her causing a tête-à-tête in the
Town and Country Magazine, when the
parties, perhaps, had never seen each
other's face before in the course of their
lives.

LADY S. She certainly has talents,
but her manner is gross.

SNAKE. 'Tis very true. She gen-
erally designs well, has a free tongue
and a bold invention; but her coloring
is too dark and her outlines often ex-
travagant. She wants that delicacy of
tint and mellowness of sneer which
distinguish your ladyship's scandal.

LADY S. You are partial, Snake.

SNAKE. Not in the least; everybody
allows that Lady Sneerwell can do more
with a word or look than many can
with the most labored detail, even when

they happen to have a little truth on their side to support it.

LADY S. Yes, my dear Snake; and I am no hypocrite to deny the satisfaction I reap from the success of my efforts. Wounded myself, in the early part of my life, by the envenomed tongue of slander, I confess I have since known no pleasure equal to the reducing others to the level of my own injured reputation.

SNAKE. Nothing can be more natural. But, Lady Sneerwell, there is one affair in which you have lately employed me, wherein, I confess, I am at a loss to guess your motives.

LADY S. I conceive you mean with respect to my neighbor, Sir Peter Teazle, and his family?

SNAKE. I do. Here are two young men to whom Sir Peter has acted as a kind of guardian since their father's death—the eldest possessing the most amiable character and universally well spoken of; the youngest, the most dissipated and extravagant young fellow in the kingdom, without friends or character: the former an avowed admirer of your ladyship, and apparently your favorite; the latter attached to Maria, Sir Peter's ward, and confessedly beloved by her. Now, on the face of these circumstances, it is utterly unaccountable to me why you, the widow of a city knight, with a good jointure, should not close with the passion of a man of such character and expectations as Mr. Surface; and more so, why you should be so uncommonly earnest to destroy the mutual attachment subsisting between his brother Charles and Maria.

LADY S. Then, at once to unravel this mystery, I must inform you that love has no share whatever in the intercourse between Mr. Surface and me.

SNAKE. No!

LADY S. His real attachment is to Maria, or her fortune; but, finding in his brother a favored rival, he has been obliged to mask his pretensions and profit by my assistance.

SNAKE. Yet still I am more puzzled why you should interest yourself in his success.

LADY S. How dull you are! Cannot you surmise the weakness which I hitherto, through shame, have concealed even from you? Must I confess that Charles—that libertine, that extravagant, that bankrupt in fortune and reputation—that he it is for whom I'm thus anxious and malicious, and to gain whom I would sacrifice everything?

SNAKE. Now, indeed, your conduct appears consistent; but how came you and Mr. Surface so confidential?

LADY S. For our mutual interest. I have found him out a long time since. I know him to be artful, selfish, and malicious—in short, a sentimental knave—while with Sir Peter, and indeed with all his acquaintance, he passes for a youthful miracle of prudence, good sense, and benevolence.

SNAKE. Yes; yet Sir Peter vows he has not his equal in England, and, above all, he praises him as a man of sentiment.

LADY S. True; and with the assistance of his sentiment and hypocrisy he has brought Sir Peter entirely into his interest with regard to Maria, while poor Charles has no friend in the house—though, I fear, he has a powerful one in Maria's heart, against whom we must direct our schemes.

[Enter SERVANT.]

SERV. Mr. Surface.

LADY S. Show him up.

[Exit SERVANT.]

[Enter JOSEPH SURFACE.]

JOSEPH. My dear Lady Sneerwell, how do you do to-day? Mr. Snake, your most obedient.

LADY S. Snake has just been rallying me on our mutual attachment, but I have informed him of our real views. You know how useful he has been to us, and, believe me, the confidence is not ill placed.

JOSEPH. Madam, it is impossible for me to suspect a man of Mr. Snake's sensibility and discernment.

LADY S. Well, well, no compliments now; but tell me when you saw your

mistress, Maria—or, what is more material to me, your brother.

JOSEPH. I have not seen either since I left you, but I can inform you that they never meet. Some of your stories have taken a good effect on Maria.

LADY S. Ah, my dear Snake! the merit of this belongs to you. But do your brother's distresses increase?

JOSEPH. Every hour. I am told he has had another execution in the house yesterday. In short, his dissipation and extravagance exceed anything I have ever heard of.

LADY S. Poor Charles!

JOSEPH. True, madam; notwithstanding his vices, one can't help feeling for him. Poor Charles! I'm sure I wish it were in my power to be of any essential service to him; for the man who does not share in the distresses of a brother, even though merited by his own misconduct, deserves—

LADY S. O lud! you are going to be moral, and forget that you are among friends.

JOSEPH. Egad, that's true! I'll keep that sentiment till I see Sir Peter. However, it is certainly a charity to rescue Maria from such a libertine, who, if he is to be reclaimed, can be so only by a person of your ladyship's superior accomplishments and understanding.

SNAKE. I believe, Lady Sneerwell, here's company coming. I'll go and copy the letter I mentioned to you. Mr. Surface, your most obedient.

JOSEPH. Sir, your very devoted.

[Exit SNAKE.]

—Lady Sneerwell, I am very sorry you have put any farther confidence in that fellow.

LADY S. Why so?

JOSEPH. I have lately detected him in frequent conference with old Rowley, who was formerly my father's steward, and has never, you know, been a friend of mine.

LADY S. And do you think he would betray us?

JOSEPH. Nothing more likely. Take my word for't, Lady Sneerwell, that fellow hasn't virtue enough to be faith-

ful even to his own villainy.—Ah, Maria!

[Enter MARIA.]

LADY S. Maria, my dear, how do you do? What's the matter?

MARIA. Oh! there's that disagreeable lover of mine, Sir Benjamin Backbite, has just called at my guardian's with his odious uncle, Crabtree; so I slipped out and ran hither to avoid them.

LADY S. Is that all?

JOSEPH. If my brother Charles had been of the party, madam, perhaps you would not have been so much alarmed.

LADY S. Nay, now you are severe, for I dare swear the truth of the matter is, Maria heard *you* were here.—But, my dear, what has Sir Benjamin done, that you would avoid him so?

MARIA. Oh, he has done nothing—but 'tis for what he has said; his conversation is a perpetual libel on all his acquaintance.

JOSEPH. Aye, and the worst of it is, there is no advantage in not knowing him; for he'll abuse a stranger just as soon as his best friend, and his uncle's as bad.

LADY S. Nay, but we should make allowance; Sir Benjamin is a wit and a poet.

MARIA. For my part, I confess, madam, wit loses its respect with me when I see it in company with malice. What do you think, Mr. Surface?

JOSEPH. Certainly, madam; to smile at the jest which plants a thorn in another's breast is to become a principal in the mischief.

LADY S. Pshaw! there's no possibility of being witty without a little ill nature. The malice of a good thing is the barb that makes it stick. What's your opinion, Mr. Surface?

JOSEPH. To be sure, madam; that conversation where the spirit of raillery is suppressed, will ever appear tedious and insipid.

MARIA. Well, I'll not debate how far scandal may be allowable, but in a man, I am sure, it is always contemptible. We have pride, envy, rivalry,

and a thousand motives to depreciate each other, but the male slanderer must have the cowardice of a woman before he can traduce one.

[*Re-enter SERVANT.*]

SERV. Madam, Mrs. Candour is below, and if your ladyship's at leisure, will leave her carriage.

LADY S. Beg her to walk in.

[*Exit SERVANT.*]

—Now, Maria, here is a character to your taste, for though Mrs. Candour is a little talkative, everybody allows her to be the best-natured and best sort of woman.

MARIA. Yes, with a very gross affectation of good nature and benevolence, she does more mischief than the direct malice of old Crabtree.

JOSEPH. I'faith that's true, Lady Sneerwell; whenever I hear the current running against the characters of my friends, I never think them in such danger as when Candour undertakes their defence.

LADY S. Hush!—here she is!

[*Enter MRS. CANDOUR.*]

MRS. CAN. My dear Lady Sneerwell, how have you been this century? —Mr. Surface, what news do you hear? —though indeed it is no matter, for I think one hears nothing else but scandal.

JOSEPH. Just so, indeed, ma'am.

MRS. CAN. Oh, Maria! child—what, is the whole affair off between you and Charles? His extravagance, I presume—the town talks of nothing else.

MARIA. Indeed! I am very sorry, ma'am, the town is not better employed.

MRS. CAN. True, true, child; but there's no stopping people's tongues. I own I was hurt to hear it, as I indeed was to learn from the same quarter that your guardian, Sir Peter, and Lady Teazle have not agreed lately as well as could be wished.

MARIA. 'Tis strangely impertinent for people to busy themselves so.

MRS. CAN. Very true, child, but

what's to be done? People will talk—there's no preventing it. Why, it was but yesterday I was told that Miss Gadabout had eloped with Sir Filigree Flirt. But, Lord! there's no minding what one hears—though, to be sure, I had this from very good authority.

MARIA. Such reports are highly scandalous.

MRS. CAN. So they are, child—shameful, shameful! But the world is so censorious, no character escapes. Lord, now who would have suspected your friend, Miss Prim, of an indiscretion? Yet such is the ill-nature of people, that they say her uncle stopped her last week, just as she was stepping into the York diligence with her dancing-master.

MARIA. I'll answer for't there are no grounds for that report.

MRS. CAN. Ah, no foundation in the world, I dare swear; no more, probably, than for the story circulated last month of Mrs. Festino's affair with Colonel Cassino—though, to be sure, that matter was never rightly cleared up.

JOSEPH. The licence of invention some people take is monstrous, indeed.

MARIA. 'Tis so; but in my opinion those who report such things are equally culpable.

MRS. CAN. To be sure they are; tale-bearers are as bad as the tale-makers—'tis an old observation, and a very true one: but what's to be done, as I said before? How will you prevent people from talking? To-day, Mrs. Clackitt assured me, Mr. and Mrs. Honeymoon were at last become mere man and wife, like the rest of their acquaintance. She likewise hinted that a certain widow, in the next street, had got rid of her dropsy and recovered her shape in a most surprising manner. And at the same time Miss Tattle, who was by, affirmed that Lord Buffalo had discovered his lady at a house of no extraordinary fame; and that Sir H. Bouquet and Tom Saunter were to measure swords on a similar provocation.—But Lord, do you think I would report these things! No, no! tale-

bearers, as I said before, are just as bad as the tale-makers.

JOSEPH. Ah! Mrs. Candour, if everybody had your forbearance and good nature!

MRS. CAN. I confess, Mr. Surface, I cannot bear to hear people attacked behind their backs; and when ugly circumstances come out against our acquaintance, I own I always love to think the best. By-the-by, I hope 'tis not true that your brother is absolutely ruined?

JOSEPH. I am afraid his circumstances are very bad indeed, ma'am.

MRS. CAN. Ah! I heard so—but you must tell him to keep up his spirits: everybody almost is in the same way—Lord Spindle, Sir Thomas Splint, Captain Quinze, and Mr. Nickitt—all up, I hear, within this week; so, if Charles is undone, he'll find half his acquaintance ruined too, and that, you know, is a consolation.

JOSEPH. Doubtless, ma'am—a very great one.

[*Re-enter SERVANT.*]

SERV. Mr. Crabtree and Sir Benjamin Backbite. [*Exit SERVANT.*]

LADY S. So, Maria, you see your lover pursues you: positively, you sha'n't escape.

[*Enter CRABTREE and SIR BENJAMIN BACKBITE.*]

CRAB. Lady Sneerwell, I kiss your hand. Mrs. Candour, I don't believe you are acquainted with my nephew, Sir Benjamin Backbite? Egad, ma'am, he has a pretty wit, and is a pretty poet too; isn't he, Lady Sneerwell?

SIR BEN. Oh, fie, uncle!

CRAB. Nay, egad, it's true; I back him at a rebus or a charade against the best rhymers in the kingdom. Has your ladyship heard the epigram he wrote last week on Lady Frizzle's feather catching fire?—Do, Benjamin, repeat it, or the charade you made last night extempore at Mrs. Drowzie's conversazione.¹² Come now; your first is

the name of a fish, your second a great naval commander, and—

SIR BEN. Uncle, now—prithee—

CRAB. I'faith, ma'am, 'twould surprise you to hear how ready he is at all these fine sort of things.

LADY S. I wonder, Sir Benjamin, you never publish anything.

SIR BEN. To say truth, ma'am, 'tis very vulgar to print; and as my little productions are mostly satires and lampoons on particular people, I find they circulate more by giving copies in confidence to the friends of the parties. However, I have some love elegies which, when favored with this lady's smiles, I mean to give the public.

[*Turning to MARIA.*]

CRAB. [*to MARIA.*] 'Fore Heaven, ma'am, they'll immortalise you!—you will be handed down to posterity, like Petrarch's Laura, or Waller's Sacharissa.¹³

SIR BEN. Yes, madam, I think you will like them when you shall see them on a beautiful quarto page where a neat rivulet of text shall meander through a meadow of margin. 'Fore Gad, they will be the most elegant things of their kind!

CRAB. But, ladies, that's true—have you heard the news?

MRS. CAN. What, sir, do you mean the report of—

CRAB. No, ma'am, that's not it.—Miss Nicely is going to be married to her own footman.

MRS. CAN. Impossible!

CRAB. Ask Sir Benjamin.

SIR BEN. 'Tis very true, ma'am; everything is fixed and the wedding liveries bespoke.

CRAB. Yes—and they do say there were pressing reasons for it.

LADY S. Why, I have heard something of this before.

MRS. CAN. It can't be—and I wonder anyone should believe such a story of so prudent a lady as Miss Nicely.

SIR BEN. O lud! ma'am, that's the very reason 'twas believed at once. She has always been so cautious and so re-

¹² Lady Dorothy Sydney.

¹² a social gathering for discussion of artistic and literary topics.

served that everybody was sure there was some reason for it at bottom.

MRS. CAN. Why, to be sure, a tale of scandal is as fatal to the credit of a prudent lady of her stamp as a fever is generally to those of the strongest constitutions. But there is a sort of puny, sickly reputation that is always ailing, yet will outlive the robust characters of a hundred prudes.

SIR BEN. True, madam, there are valetudinarians in reputation as well as constitution, who, being conscious of their weak part, avoid the least breath of air and supply their want of stamina by care and circumspection.

MRS. CAN. Well, but this may be all a mistake. You know, Sir Benjamin, very trifling circumstances often give rise to the most injurious tales.

CRAB. That they do, I'll be sworn, ma'am. Did you ever hear how Miss Piper came to lose her lover and her character last summer at Tunbridge? ¹⁴—Sir Benjamin, you remember it?

SIR BEN. Oh, to be sure!—the most whimsical circumstance.

LADY S. How was it, pray?

CRAB. Why, one evening, at Mrs. Ponto's assembly, the conversation happened to turn on the breeding Nova Scotia sheep in this country. Says a young lady in company, "I have known instances of it; for, Miss Letitia Piper, a first cousin of mine, had a Nova Scotia sheep that produced her twins." "What!" cries the Lady Dowager DUNDIZZY (who you know is as deaf as a post), "has Miss Piper had twins?" This mistake, as you may imagine, threw the whole company into a fit of laughter. However, 'twas the next morning everywhere reported and in a few days believed by the whole town, that Miss Letitia Piper had actually been brought to bed of a fine boy and girl; and in less than a week there were some people who could name the father and the farm-house where the babies were put to nurse.

LADY S. Strange, indeed!

CRAB. Matter of fact, I assure you.

¹⁴ a watering place thirty miles from London.

O lud; Mr. Surface, pray, is it true that your uncle, Sir Oliver, is coming home?

JOSEPH. Not that I know of, indeed, sir.

CRAB. He has been in the East Indies a long time. You can scarcely remember him, I believe. Sad comfort, whenever he returns, to hear how your brother has gone on!

JOSEPH. Charles has been imprudent, sir, to be sure, but I hope no busy people have already prejudiced Sir Oliver against him. He may reform.

SIR BEN. To be sure he may. For my part, I never believed him to be so utterly void of principle as people say, and, though he has lost all his friends, I am told nobody is better spoken of by the Jews.

CRAB. That's true, egad, nephew. If the Old Jewry ¹⁵ was a ward, I believe Charles would be an alderman; no man more popular there, 'fore Gad! I hear he pays as many annuities as the Irish tontine, and that, whenever he is sick, they have prayers for the recovery of his health in all the synagogues.

SIR BEN. Yet no man lives in greater splendor. They tell me, when he entertains his friends he will sit down to dinner with a dozen of his own securities, have a score of tradesmen waiting in the ante-chamber, and an officer behind every guest's chair.

JOSEPH. This may be entertainment to you, gentlemen, but you pay very little regard to the feelings of a brother.

MARIA. [*aside.*] Their malice is intolerable!—[*aloud.*] Lady Sneerwell, I must wish you a good morning; I'm not very well. [*Exit MARIA.*]

MRS. CAN. Oh, dear! she changes color very much.

LADY S. Do, Mrs. Candour, follow her; she may want your assistance.

MRS. CAN. That I will, with all my soul, ma'am.—Poor dear girl; who knows what her situation may be!

[*Exit MRS. CANDOUR.*]

LADY S. 'Twas nothing but that she could not bear to hear Charles reflected on, notwithstanding their difference.

¹⁵ a quarter near the Bank of England inhabited by Jewish money-lenders.

SIR BEN. The young lady's *penchant* is obvious.

CRAB. But, Benjamin, you must not give up the pursuit for that; follow her and put her into good humor. Repeat her some of your own verses. Come, I'll assist you.

SIR BEN. Mr. Surface, I did not mean to hurt you, but depend on't, your brother is utterly undone.

CRAB. O lud, aye; undone as ever man was!—can't raise a guinea.

SIR BEN. And everything sold, I'm told, that was movable.

CRAB. I have seen one that was at his house.—Not a thing left but some empty bottles that were overlooked, and the family pictures, which I believe are framed in the wainscots.

SIR BEN. [*going.*] And I'm very sorry also to hear some bad stories against him.

CRAB. Oh, he has done many mean things, that's certain.

SIR BEN. [*going.*] But, however, as he's your brother—

CRAB. We'll tell you all another opportunity.

[*Exeunt CRABTREE and SIR BENJAMIN.*]

LADY S. Ha! ha! 'tis very hard for them to leave a subject they have not quite run down.

JOSEPH. And I believe the abuse was no more acceptable to your ladyship than Maria.

LADY S. I doubt her affections are farther engaged than we imagine. But the family are to be here this evening, so you may as well dine where you are and we shall have an opportunity of observing farther; in the meantime, I'll go and plot mischief and you shall study sentiment. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.

A Room in SIR PETER TEAZLE'S House

[*Enter SIR PETER.*]

SIR PET. When an old bachelor marries a young wife, what is he to expect? 'Tis now six months since Lady Teazle made me the happiest of men—and

I have been the most miserable dog ever since. We tiffed a little going to church, and fairly quarrelled before the bells had done ringing. I was more than once nearly choked with gall during the honeymoon, and had lost all comfort in life before my friends had done wishing me joy. Yet I chose with caution—a girl bred wholly in the country, who never knew luxury beyond one silk gown nor dissipation above the annual gala of a race ball. Yet she now plays her part in all the extravagant fopperies of the fashion and the town with as ready a grace as if she never had seen a bush or a grass-plot out of Grosvenor Square! I am sneered at by all my acquaintance and paragraphed in the newspapers. She dissipates my fortune and contradicts all my humors; yet the worst of it is, I doubt I love her, or I should never bear all this. However, I'll never be weak enough to own it.

[*Enter ROWLEY.*]

Row. Oh! Sir Peter, your servant, how is it with you, sir?

SIR PET. Very bad, Master Rowley, very bad. I meet with nothing but crosses and vexations.

Row. What can have happened to trouble you since yesterday?

SIR PET. A good question to a married man!

Row. Nay, I'm sure your lady, Sir Peter, can't be the cause of your uneasiness.

SIR PET. Why, has anybody told you she was dead?

Row. Come, come, Sir Peter, you love her, notwithstanding your tempers don't exactly agree.

SIR PET. But the fault is entirely hers, Master Rowley. I am, myself, the sweetest-tempered man alive, and hate a teasing temper; and so I tell her a hundred times a day.

Row. Indeed!

SIR PET. Aye; and what is very extraordinary, in all our disputes she is always in the wrong. But Lady Sneerwell and the set she meets at her house encourage the perverseness of her

disposition. Then, to complete my vexation, Maria, my ward, whom I ought to have the power of a father over, is determined to turn rebel too, and absolutely refuses the man whom I have long resolved on for her husband—meaning, I suppose, to bestow herself on his profligate brother.

Row. You know, Sir Peter, I have always taken the liberty to differ with you on the subject of these two young gentlemen: I only wish you may not be deceived in your opinion of the elder. For Charles, my life on't! he will retrieve his errors yet. Their worthy father, once my honored master, was, at his years, nearly as wild a spark; yet when he died, he did not leave a more benevolent heart to lament his loss.

SIR PET. You are wrong, Master Rowley. On their father's death, you know, I acted as a kind of guardian to them both till their uncle Sir Oliver's liberality gave them an early independence; of course, no person could have more opportunities of judging of their hearts, and I was never mistaken in my life. Joseph is indeed a model for the young men of the age. He is a man of sentiment and acts up to the *sentiments* he professes; but for the other, take my word for't, if he had any grain of virtue by descent, he has dissipated it with the rest of his inheritance. Ah! my old friend, Sir Oliver, will be deeply mortified when he finds how part of his bounty has been misapplied.

Row. I am sorry to find you so violent against the young man, because this may be the most critical period of his fortune. I came hither with news that will surprise you.

SIR PET. What! let me hear.

Row. Sir Oliver is arrived and at this moment in town.

SIR PET. How! you astonish me! I thought you did not expect him this month.

Row. I did not, but his passage has been remarkably quick.

SIR PET. Egad, I shall rejoice to see my old friend. 'Tis fifteen years since

we met. We have had many a day together. But does he still enjoin us not to inform his nephews of his arrival?

Row. Most strictly. He means before it is known to make some trial of their dispositions.

SIR PET. Ah! there needs no art to discover their merits—he shall have his way; but pray, does he know I am married?

Row. Yes, and will soon wish you joy.

SIR PET. What, as we drink health to a friend in a consumption! Ah! Oliver will laugh at me. We used to rail at matrimony together, but he has been steady to his text. Well, he must be soon at my house, though—I'll instantly give orders for his reception. But, Master Rowley, don't drop a word that Lady Teazle and I ever disagree.

Row. By no means.

SIR PET. For I should never be able to stand Noll's jokes; so I'd have him think, Lord forgive me! that we are a very happy couple.

Row. I understand you; but then you must be very careful not to differ while he is in the house with you.

SIR PET. Egad, and so we must—and that's impossible. Ah! Master Rowley, when an old bachelor marries a young wife, he deserves—no—the crime carries its punishment along with it.

[*Exeunt.*]

ACT II

SCENE I.

A Room in SIR PETER TEAZLE'S House

[*Enter SIR PETER and LADY TEAZLE.*]

SIR PET. Lady Teazle, Lady Teazle, I'll not bear it!

LADY T. Sir Peter, Sir Peter, you may bear it or not, as you please; but I ought to have my own way in everything—and what's more I will, too. What! though I was educated in the country, I know very well that women of fashion in London are accountable to nobody after they are married.

SIR P. Very well, ma'am, very well; so a husband is to have no influence, no authority?

LADY T. Authority! No, to be sure. If you wanted authority over me, you should have adopted me, and not married me; I am sure you were old enough.

SIR PET. Old enough!—aye, there it is. Well, well, Lady Teazle, though my life may be made unhappy by your temper, I'll not be ruined by your extravagance!

LADY T. My extravagance! I'm sure I'm not more extravagant than a woman of fashion ought to be.

SIR PET. No, no, madam, you shall throw away no more sums on such unmeaning luxury. 'Slife! to spend as much to furnish your dressing-room with flowers in winter as would suffice to turn the Pantheon¹⁶ into a greenhouse, and give a *fête champêtre*¹⁷ at Christmas.

LADY T. And am I to blame, Sir Peter, because flowers are dear in cold weather? You should find fault with the climate, and not with me. For my part, I'm sure I wish it was spring all the year round and that roses grew under our feet.

SIR PET. Oons! madam—if you had been born to this, I shouldn't wonder at your talking thus; but you forget what your situation was when I married you.

LADY T. No, no, I don't; 'twas a very disagreeable one, or I should never have married you.

SIR PET. Yes, yes, madam, you were then in somewhat a humbler style—the daughter of a plain country squire. Recollect, Lady Teazle, when I saw you first sitting at your tambour, in a pretty figured linen gown, with a bunch of keys at your side, your hair combed smooth over a roll, and your apartment hung round with fruits in worsted of your own working.

LADY T. Oh, yes! I remember it very well, and a curious life I led—my daily occupation to inspect the dairy, super-

intend the poultry, make extracts from the family receipt-book, and comb my aunt Deborah's lapdog.

SIR PET. Yes, yes, ma'am, 'twas so indeed.

LADY T. And then, you know, my evening amusements!—to draw patterns for ruffles, which I had not materials to make up; to play Pope Joan¹⁸ with the curate; to read a sermon to my aunt; or to be stuck down to an old spinet to strum my father to sleep after a fox-chase.

SIR PET. I am glad you have so good a memory. Yes, madam, these were the recreations I took you from; but now you must have your coach—vis-à-vis—and three powdered footmen before your chair; and, in the summer, a pair of white cats to draw you to Kensington Gardens. No recollection, I suppose, when you were content to ride double, behind the butler, on a docked coach-horse.

LADY T. No—I swear I never did that. I deny the butler and the coach-horse.

SIR PET. This, madam, was your situation; and what have I done for you? I have made you a woman of fashion, of fortune, of rank—in short, I have made you my wife.

LADY T. Well, then, and there is but one thing more you can make me to add to the obligation, and that is—

SIR PET. My widow, I suppose?

LADY T. Hem! hem!

SIR PET. I thank you, madam—but don't flatter yourself; for, though your ill conduct may disturb my peace, it shall never break my heart, I promise you: however, I am equally obliged to you for the hint.

LADY T. Then why will you endeavor to make yourself so disagreeable to me and thwart me in every little elegant expense?

SIR PET. 'Slife, madam, I say, had you any of these little elegant expenses when you married me?

LADY T. Lud, Sir Peter! would you have me be out of the fashion?

SIR PET. The fashion, indeed! what

¹⁶ a fashionable London concert hall.

¹⁷ an open-air entertainment.

¹⁸ a card game.

had you to do with the fashion before you married me?

LADY T. For my part, I should think you would like to have your wife thought a woman of taste.

SIR PET. Aye—there again—taste! Sounds! madam, you had no taste when you married me!

LADY T. That's very true, indeed, Sir Peter; and, after having married you, I should never pretend to taste again, I allow. But now, Sir Peter, if we have finished our daily jangle, I presume I may go to my engagement at Lady Sneerwell's.

SIR PET. Aye, there's another precious circumstance—a charming set of acquaintance you have made there!

LADY T. Nay, Sir Peter, they are all people of rank and fortune, and remarkably tenacious of reputation.

SIR PET. Yes, egad, they are tenacious of reputation with a vengeance, for they don't choose anybody should have a character but themselves! Such a crew! Ah! many a wretch has rid on a hurdle who has done less mischief than these utterers of forged tales, coiners of scandal, and clippers of reputation.

LADY T. What, would you restrain the freedom of speech?

SIR PET. Ah! they have made you just as bad as any one of the society.

LADY T. Why, I believe I do bear a part with a tolerable grace. But I vow, I bear no malice against the people I abuse; when I say an ill-natured thing, 'tis out of pure good humor, and I take it for granted they deal exactly in the same manner with me. But, Sir Peter, you know you promised to come to Lady Sneerwell's too.

SIR PET. Yes, well, I'll call in, just to look after my own character.

LADY T. Then, indeed, you must make haste after me, or you'll be too late. So good-bye to ye.

[Exit LADY TEAZLE.]

SIR PET. So—I have gained much by my intended expostulation! Yet with what a charming air she contradicts everything I say, and how pleasantly she shows her contempt for my

authority! Well, though I can't make her love me, there is great satisfaction in quarrelling with her, and I think she never appears to such advantage as when she is doing everything in her power to plague me. [Exit.]

SCENE II.

A Room at LADY SNEERWELL'S House

[Enter LADY SNEERWELL, MRS. CANDOUR, CRABTREE, SIR BENJAMIN BACKBITE, and JOSEPH SURFACE.]

LADY S. Nay, positively, we will hear it.

JOSEPH. Yes, yes, the epigram, by all means.

SIR BEN. Oh, plague on't, uncle! 'tis mere nonsense.

CRAB. No, no; 'fore Gad, very clever for an extempore!

SIR BEN. But ladies, you should be acquainted with the circumstance. You must know that one day last week, as Lady Betty Currie was taking the dust in Hyde Park,¹⁹ in a sort of duodecimo²⁰ phaeton, she desired me to write some verses on her ponies; upon which, I took out my pocketbook, and in one moment produced the following:

Sure never were seen two such beautiful ponies;
Other horses are clowns, but these macaronies:
To give them this title I'm sure can't be wrong,
Their legs are so slim, and their tails are so long.

CRAB. There, ladies, done in the smack of a whip, and on horseback too.

JOSEPH. A very Phœbus, mounted—indeed, Sir Benjamin!

SIR BEN. Oh, dear, sir! trifles—trifles.

[Enter LADY TEAZLE and MARIA.]

MRS. CAN. I must have a copy.

LADY S. Lady Teazle, I hope we shall see Sir Peter?

¹⁹ contained the most fashionable London drive.

²⁰ very small.

LADY T. I believe he'll wait on your ladyship presently.

LADY S. Maria, my love, you look grave. Come, you shall sit down to piquet with Mr. Surface.

MARIA. I take very little pleasure in cards—however, I'll do as you please.

LADY T. [*aside.*] I am surprised Mr. Surface should sit down with her; I thought he would have embraced this opportunity of speaking to me before Sir Peter came.

MRS. CAN. Now, I'll die, but you are so scandalous, I'll forswear your society.

LADY T. What's the matter, Mrs. Candour?

MRS. CAN. They'll not allow our friend Miss Vermilion to be handsome.

LADY S. Oh, surely she is a pretty woman.

CRAB. I am very glad you think so, ma'am.

MRS. CAN. She has a charming fresh color.

LADY T. Yes, when it is fresh put on.

MRS. CAN. Oh, fie! I'll swear her color is natural; I have seen it come and go.

LADY T. I dare swear you have, ma'am; it goes off at night and comes again in the morning.

SIR BEN. True, ma'am; it not only comes and goes, but what's more, egad, her maid can fetch and carry it!

MRS. CAN. Ha! ha! ha! how I hate to hear you talk so! But surely, now, her sister *is*, or *was*, very handsome.

CRAB. Who? Mrs. Evergreen? O Lord! she's six-and-fifty if she's an hour!

MRS. CAN. Now positively you wrong her; fifty-two or fifty-three is the utmost—and I don't think she looks more.

SIR BEN. Ah! there's no judging by her looks unless one could see her face.

LADY S. Well, well, if Mrs. Evergreen *does* take some pains to repair the ravages of time, you must allow she effects it with great ingenuity; and surely that's better than the careless

manner in which the widow Ochre chalks her wrinkles.

SIR BEN. Nay now, Lady Sneerwell, you are severe upon the widow. Come, come 'tis not that she paints so ill—but when she has finished her face, she joins it on so badly to her neck that she looks like a mended statue, in which the connoisseur may see at once that the head is modern, though the trunk's antique.

CRAB. Ha! ha! ha! Well said, nephew!

MRS. CAN. Ha! ha! ha! Well, you make me laugh; but I vow I hate you for it. What do you think of Miss Simper?

SIR BEN. Why, she has very pretty teeth.

LADY T. Yes, and on that account, when she is neither speaking nor laughing (which very seldom happens), she never absolutely shuts her mouth, but leaves it always on ajar, as it were—thus. [*Shows her teeth.*]

MRS. CAN. How can you be so ill-natured?

LADY T. Nay, I allow even that's better than the pains Mrs. Prim takes to conceal her losses in front. She draws her mouth till it positively resembles the aperture of a poor's-box, and all her words appear to slide out edgewise as it were—thus: "How do you do, madam? Yes, madam."

LADY S. Very well, Lady Teazle; I see you can be a little severe.

LADY T. In defence of a friend, it is but justice.—But here comes Sir Peter to spoil our pleasantry.

[*Enter SIR PETER TEAZLE.*]

SIR PET. Ladies, your most obedient.—[*aside.*] Mercy on me, here is the whole set! a character dead at every word, I suppose.

MRS. CAN. I am rejoiced you are come, Sir Peter. They have been so censorious—and Lady Teazle as bad as anyone.

SIR PET. That must be very distressing to *you*, Mrs. Candour, I dare swear.

MRS. CAN. Oh, they will allow good

qualities to nobody—not even good nature to our friend Mrs. Pursy.

LADY T. What, the fat dowager who was at Mrs. Quadrille's last night?

MRS. CAN. Nay, her bulk is her misfortune; and, when she takes so much pains to get rid of it, you ought not to reflect on her.

LADY S. That's very true, indeed.

LADY T. Yes, I know she almost lives on acids and small whey; laces herself by pulleys; and often, in the hottest noon in summer, you may see her on a little squat pony, with her hair plaited up behind like a drummer's and puffing round the Ring²¹ on a full trot.

MRS. CAN. I thank you, Lady Teazle, for defending her.

SIR PET. Yes, a good defence, truly.

MRS. CAN. Truly, Lady Teazle is as censorious as Miss Sallow.

CRAB. Yes, and she is a curious being to pretend to be censorious—an awkward gawky, without any one good point under heaven.

MRS. CAN. Positively you shall not be so very severe. Miss Sallow is a near relation of mine by marriage, and as for her person great allowance is to be made; for let me tell you, a woman labors under many disadvantages who tries to pass for a girl at six-and-thirty.

LADY S. Though surely, she is handsome still—and for the weakness in her eyes, considering how much she reads by candlelight, it is not to be wondered at.

MRS. CAN. True, and then as to her manner: upon my word, I think it is particularly graceful, considering she never had the least education; for you know her mother was a Welsh milliner, and her father a sugar-baker at Bristol.

SIR BEN. Ah! you are both of you too good-natured!

SIR PET. [*aside.*] Yes, damned good-natured! This their own relation! mercy on me!

²¹ the Hyde Park drive, where carriages could pass in opposite directions about a circular lawn.

MRS. CAN. For my part, I own I cannot bear to hear a friend ill spoken of.

SIR PET. No, to be sure!

SIR BEN. Oh! you are of a moral turn. Mrs. Candour and I can sit for an hour and hear Lady Stucco talk sentiment.

LADY T. Nay, I vow Lady Stucco is very well with the dessert after dinner, for she's just like the French fruit one cracks for mottoes—made up of paint and proverb.

MRS. CAN. Well, I will never join in ridiculing a friend, and so I constantly tell my cousin Ogle—and you all know what pretensions she has to be critical on beauty.

CRAB. Oh, to be sure! she has herself the oddest countenance that ever was seen; 'tis a collection of features from all the different countries of the globe.

SIR BEN. So she has, indeed—an Irish front—

CRAB. Caledonian locks—

SIR BEN. Dutch nose—

CRAB. Austrian lips—

SIR BEN. Complexion of a Spaniard—

CRAB. And teeth *à la Chinoise*—

SIR BEN. In short, her face resembles a table d'hôte at Spa,²² where no two guests are of a nation—

CRAB. Or a congress at the close of a general war—wherein all the members, even to her eyes, appear to have a different interest, and her nose and chin are the only parties likely to join issue.

MRS. CAN. Ha! ha! hæ!

SIR PET. [*aside.*] Mercy on my life!—a person they dine with twice a week!

LADY S. Go, go; you are a couple of provoking toads.

MRS. CAN. Nay, but I vow you shall not carry the laugh off so—for give me leave to say that Mrs. Ogle—

SIR PET. Madam, madam, I beg your pardon—there's no stopping these good gentlemen's tongues. But when

²² a Belgian watering place.

I tell you, Mrs. Candour, that the lady they are abusing is a particular friend of mine, I hope you'll not take her part.

LADY S. Ha! ha! ha! well said, Sir Peter! but you are a cruel creature—too phlegmatic yourself for a jest and too peevish to allow wit in others.

SIR PET. Ah, madam, true wit is more nearly allied to good nature than your ladyship is aware of.

LADY T. True, Sir Peter; I believe they are so near akin that they can never be united.

SIR BEN. Or rather, madam, suppose them to be man and wife, because one seldom sees them together.

LADY T. But Sir Peter is such an enemy to scandal, I believe he would have it put down by Parliament.

SIR PET. 'Fore Heaven, madam, if they were to consider the sporting with reputation of as much importance as poaching on manors, and pass an act for the preservation of fame as well as game, I believe many would thank them for the bill.

LADY S. O lud! Sir Peter; would you deprive us of our privileges?

SIR PET. Aye, madam, and then no person should be permitted to kill characters and run down reputations but qualified old maids and disappointed widows.

LADY S. Go, you monster!

MRS. CAN. But surely you would not be quite so severe on those who only report what they hear?

SIR PET. 'Yes, madam, I would have law merchant²³ for them too; and in all cases of slander currency, whenever the drawer of the lie was not to be found, the injured parties should have a right to come on any of the indorsers.

CRAB. Well, for my part, I believe there never was a scandalous tale without some foundation.

SIR PET. Oh, nine out of ten of the malicious inventions are founded on some ridiculous misrepresentation.

LADY S. Come, ladies, shall we sit down to cards in the next room?

²³ commercial law.

[Enter SERVANT, who whispers to SIR PETER.]

SIR PET. I'll be with them directly.

[Exit SERVANT.]

[aside.] I'll get away unperceived.

LADY S. Sir Peter, you are not going to leave us?

SIR PET. Your ladyship must excuse me; I'm called away by particular business. But I leave my character behind me.

[Exit SIR PETER.]

SIR BEN. Well—certainly, Lady Teazle, that lord of yours is a strange being. I could tell you some stories of him would make you laugh heartily if he were not your husband.

LADY T. Oh, pray don't mind that; come, do let's hear them.

[Joins the rest of the company going into the next room.]

JOSEPH. Maria, I see you have no satisfaction in this society.

MARIA. How is it possible I should? If to raise malicious smiles at the infirmities or misfortunes of those who have never injured us be the province of wit or humor, Heaven grant me a double portion of dulness!

JOSEPH. Yet they appear more ill-natured than they are; they have no malice at heart.

MARIA. Then is their conduct still more contemptible, for in my opinion nothing could excuse the interference of their tongues but a natural and uncontrollable bitterness of mind.

JOSEPH. Undoubtedly, madam, and it has always been a sentiment of mine that to propagate a malicious truth wantonly is more despicable than to falsify from revenge. But can you, Maria, feel thus for others and be unkind to me alone? Is hope to be denied the tenderest passion?

MARIA. Why will you distress me by renewing this subject?

JOSEPH. Ah, Maria! you would not treat me thus and oppose your guardian Sir Peter's will but that I see that profligate Charles is still a favored rival.

MARIA. Ungenerously urged! But whatever my sentiments are for that

unfortunate young man, be assured I shall not feel more bound to give him up because his distresses have lost him the regard even of a brother.

JOSEPH. Nay, but, Maria, do not leave me with a frown; by all that's honest, I swear—

[*Re-enter LADY TEAZLE behind.*]

—[*aside.*] Gad's life, here's Lady Teazle.—[*aloud to MARIA.*] You must not—no, you shall not—for though I have the greatest regard for Lady Teazle—

MARIA. Lady Teazle!

JOSEPH. Yet were Sir Peter to suspect—

[*Enter LADY TEAZLE and comes forward.*]

LADY T. What is this, pray? Do you take her for me?—Child, you are wanted in the next room.

[*Exit MARIA.*]

—What is all this, pray?

JOSEPH. Oh, the most unlucky circumstance in nature! Maria has somehow suspected the tender concern I have for your happiness and threatened to acquaint Sir Peter with her suspicions, and I was just endeavoring to reason with her when you came in.

LADY T. Indeed! but you seemed to adopt a very tender mode of reasoning—do you usually argue on your knees?

JOSEPH. Oh, she's a child, and I thought a little bombast—But, Lady Teazle, when are you to give me your judgment on my library, as you promised?

LADY T. No, no! I begin to think it would be imprudent, and you know I admit you as a lover no farther than fashion requires.

JOSEPH. True—a mere Platonic cicisbeo²⁴—what every wife is entitled to.

LADY T. Certainly, one must not be out of the fashion. However, I have so much of my country prejudices left that though Sir Peter's ill humor may vex me ever so, it never shall provoke me to—

JOSEPH. The only revenge in your power. Well, I applaud your moderation.

LADY T. Go—you are an insinuating wretch! But we shall be missed—let us join the company.

JOSEPH. But we had best not return together.

LADY T. Well, don't stay; for Maria sha'n't come to hear any more of your reasoning, I promise you.

[*Exit LADY TEAZLE.*]

JOSEPH. A curious dilemma my politics have run me into! I wanted, at first, only to ingratiate myself with Lady Teazle, that she might not be my enemy with Maria; and I have, I don't know how, become her serious lover. Sincerely I begin to wish I had never made such a point of gaining so very good a character, for it has led me into so many cursed rogueries that I doubt I shall be exposed at last. [*Exit.*]

SCENE III.

A Room in SIR PETER TEAZLE'S House

[*Enter ROWLEY and SIR OLIVER SURFACE.*]

SIR O. Ha! ha! ha! so my old friend is married, hey?—a young wife out of the country. Ha! ha! ha! that he should have stood bluff to old bachelor so long and sink into a husband at last!

Row. But you must not rally him on the subject, Sir Oliver; 'tis a tender point, I assure you, though he has been married only seven months.

SIR O. Then he has been just half a year on the stool of repentance!—Poor Peter! But you say he has entirely given up Charles—never sees him, hey?

Row. His prejudice against him is astonishing, and I am sure greatly increased by a jealousy of him with Lady Teazle, which he has industriously been led into by a scandalous society in the neighborhood, who have contributed not a little to Charles's ill name. Whereas the truth is, I believe, if the lady is partial to either of them, his brother is the favorite.

²⁴ the recognized gallant of a married woman.

SIR O. Aye, I know there are a set of malicious, prating, prudent gossips, both male and female, who murder characters to kill time and will rob a young fellow of his good name before he has years to know the value of it. But I am not to be prejudiced against my nephew by such, I promise you! No, no; if Charles has done nothing false or mean, I shall compound for his extravagance.

Row. Then, my life on't, you will reclaim him. Ah, sir, it gives me new life to find that *your* heart is not turned against him, and that the son of my good old master has one friend, however, left.

SIR O. What! shall I forget, Master Rowley, when I was at his years myself? Egad, my brother and I were neither of us very prudent youths, and yet, I believe, you have not seen many better men than your old master was.

Row. Sir, 'tis this reflection gives me assurance that Charles may yet be a credit to his family. But here comes Sir Peter.

SIR O. Egad, so he does! Mercy on me! he's greatly altered, and seems to have a settled married look! One may read "husband" in his face at this distance!

[Enter SIR PETER TEAZLE.]

SIR PET. Ha! Sir Oliver—my old friend! Welcome to England a thousand times!

SIR O. Thank you, thank you, Sir Peter! and i'faith, I am glad to find you well, believe me!

SIR PET. Oh! 'tis a long time since we met—fifteen years, I doubt, Sir Oliver, and many a cross accident in the time.

SIR O. Aye, I have had my share. But, what! I find you are married—hey? Well, well, it can't be helped, and so—I wish you joy with all my heart!

SIR PET. Thank you, thank you, Sir Oliver.—Yes, I have entered into—the happy state; but we'll not talk of that now.

SIR O. True, true, Sir Peter; old

friends should not begin on grievance at first meeting—no, no, no.

Row. [*aside to SIR OLIVER.*] Take care, pray, sir.

SIR O. Well, so one of my nephews is a wild fellow, hey?

SIR PET. Wild! Ah! my old friend, I grieve for your disappointment there; he's a lost young man, indeed. However, his brother will make you amends; Joseph is, indeed, what a youth should be. Everybody in the world speaks well of him.

SIR O. I am sorry to hear it; he has too good a character to be an honest fellow.—Everybody speaks well of him! Pshaw! then he has bowed as low to knaves and fools as to the honest dignity of genius and virtue.

SIR PET. What, Sir Oliver! do you blame him for not making enemies?

SIR O. Yes, if he has merit enough to deserve them.

SIR PET. Well, well—you'll be convinced when you know him. 'Tis education to hear him converse; he professes the noblest sentiments.

SIR O. Oh, plague of his sentiments! If he salutes me with a scrap of morality in his mouth, I shall be satisfied directly. But, however, don't mistake me, Sir Peter; I don't mean to defend Charles's errors, but before I form my judgment of either of them, I intend to make a trial of their hearts, and my friend Rowley and I have planned something for the purpose.

Row. And Sir Peter shall own for once he has been mistaken.

SIR PET. Oh, my life on Joseph's honor!

SIR O. Well—come, give us a bottle of good wine, and we'll drink the lad's health and tell you our scheme.

SIR PET. *Allons*,²⁵ then!

SIR O. And don't, Sir Peter, be so severe against your old friend's son. Odds my life! I am not sorry that he has run out of the course a little. For my part, I hate to see prudence clinging to the green suckers of youth; 't is like ivy round a sapling, and spoils the growth of the tree. [Exeunt

²⁵ let us go.

ACT III

SCENE I.

A Room in SIR PETER TEAZLE'S House

[*Enter SIR PETER TEAZLE, SIR OLIVER SURFACE, and ROWLEY.*]

SIR PET. Well then, we will see this fellow first and have our wine afterwards. But how is this, Master Rowley? I don't see the jet²⁰ of your scheme.

Row. Why, sir, this Mr. Stanley, who I was speaking of, is nearly related to them by their mother. He was once a merchant in Dublin, but has been ruined by a series of undeserved misfortunes. He has applied, by letter, to Mr. Surface and Charles. From the former he has received nothing but evasive promises of future service, while Charles has done all that is extravagance has left him power to do; and he is, at this time, endeavoring to raise a sum of money, part of which, in the midst of his own distresses, I know he intends for the service of poor Stanley.

SIR O. Ah! he is my brother's son.
SIR PET. Well, but how is Sir Oliver personally to—

Row. Why, sir, I will inform Charles and his brother that Stanley has obtained permission to apply personally to his friends; and as they have neither of them ever seen him, let Sir Oliver assume his character and he will have a fair opportunity of judging, at least of the benevolence of their dispositions. And believe me, sir, you will find in the youngest brother one who, in the midst of folly and dissipation, has still, as our immortal bard expresses it,

a heart to pity, and a hand
Open as day for melting charity.²¹

SIR PET. Pshaw! What signifies his having an open hand or purse either when he has nothing left to give? Well, well—make the trial if you please. But where is the fellow whom

you brought for Sir Oliver to examine relative to Charles's affairs?

Row. Below, waiting his commands, and no one can give him better intelligence.—This, Sir Oliver, is a friendly Jew, who, to do him justice, has done everything in his power to bring your nephew to a proper sense of his extravagance.

SIR PET. Pray, let us have him in.

Row. [*apart to SERVANT.*] Desire Mr. Moses to walk up stairs.

SIR PET. But pray, why should you suppose he will speak the truth?

Row. Oh, I have convinced him that he has no chance of recovering certain sums advanced to Charles but through the bounty of Sir Oliver, who he knows is arrived; so that you may depend on his fidelity to his own interests. I have also another evidence in my power, one Snake, whom I have detected in a matter little short of forgery, and shall shortly produce him to remove some of your prejudices.

SIR PET. I have heard too much on that subject.

Row. Here comes the honest Israelite.

[*Enter MOSES.*]

—This is Sir Oliver.

SIR O. Sir, I understand you have lately had great dealings with my nephew Charles.

MOSES. Yes, Sir Oliver, I have done all I could for him, but he was ruined before he came to me for assistance.

SIR O. That was unlucky, truly, for you have had no opportunity of showing your talents.

MOSES. None at all; I hadn't the pleasure of knowing his distresses till he was some thousands worse than nothing.

SIR O. Unfortunate, indeed! But I suppose you have done all in your power for him, honest Moses?

MOSES. Yes, he knows that. This very evening I was to have brought him a gentleman from the city, who does not know him and will, I believe, advance him some money.

²⁰ point. ²¹ 2 *Henry IV*, IV, iv, 31-32.

SIR PET. What, one Charles has never had money from before?

MOSES. Yes—Mr. Premium of Crutched Friars,²⁸ formerly a broker.

SIR PET. Egad, Sir Oliver, a thought strikes me!—Charles, you say, does not know Mr. Premium?

MOSES. Not at all.

SIR PET. Now then, Sir Oliver, you may have a better opportunity of satisfying yourself than by an old romancing tale of a poor relation; go with my friend Moses and represent Premium, and then, I'll answer for it, you'll see your nephew in all his glory.

SIR O. Egad, I like this idea better than the other, and I may visit Joseph afterwards as old Stanley.

SIR PET. True, so you may.

ROW. Well, this is taking Charles rather at a disadvantage, to be sure. However, Moses, you understand Sir Peter and will be faithful?

MOSES. You may depend upon me.—This is near the time I was to have gone.

SIR O. I'll accompany you as soon as you please, Moses—But hold! I have forgot one thing; how the plague shall I be able to pass for a Jew?

MOSES. There's no need—the principal is Christian.

SIR O. Is he? I'm very sorry to hear it. But then again, an't I rather too smartly dressed to look like a moneylender?

SIR PET. Not at all; 'twould not be out of character if you went in your own carriage—would it, Moses?

MOSES. Not in the least.

SIR O. Well, but how must I talk? there's certainly some cant of usury and mode of treating that I ought to know.

SIR PET. Oh, there's not much to learn. The great point, as I take it, is to be exorbitant enough in your demands. Hey, Moses?

MOSES. Yes, that's a very great point.

SIR O. I'll answer for't I'll not be wanting in that. I'll ask him eight or ten per cent on the loan, at least.

²⁸ a London street.

MOSES. If you ask him no more than that you'll be discovered immediately.

SIR O. Hey! what, the plague! how much then?

MOSES. That depends upon the circumstances. If he appears not very anxious for the supply, you should require only forty or fifty per cent; but if you find him in great distress and want the moneys very bad, you may ask double.

SIR PET. A good honest trade you're learning, Sir Oliver.

SIR O. Truly, I think so—and not unprofitable.

MOSES. Then, you know, you haven't the moneys yourself, but are forced to borrow them for him of a friend.

SIR O. Oh! I borrow it of a friend, do I?

MOSES. And your friend is an unconscionable dog, but you can't help that.

SIR O. My friend an unconscionable dog, is he?

MOSES. Yes, and he himself has not the moneys by him, but is forced to sell stock at a great loss.

SIR O. He is forced to sell stock at a great loss, is he? Well, that's very kind of him.

SIR PET. I'faith, Sir Oliver—Mr. Premium, I mean—you'll soon be master of the trade. But, Moses, would not you have him run out a little against the Annuity Bill?²⁹ That would be in character, I should think.

MOSES. Very much.

ROW. And lament that a young man now must be at years of discretion before he is suffered to ruin himself?

MOSES. Aye, great pity!

SIR PET. And abuse the public for allowing merit to an act whose only object is to snatch misfortune and imprudence from the rapacious gripe of usury, and give the minor a chance of inheriting his estate without being undone by coming into possession.

²⁹ an act of Parliament intended to protect minors in contracts made with them for annuities.

SIR O. So, so—Moses shall give me farther instructions as we go together.

SIR PET. You will not have much time, for your nephew lives hard by.

SIR O. Oh, never fear! my tutor appears so able that though Charles lived in the next street, it must be my own fault if I am not a complete rogue before I turn the corner.

[Exit SIR OLIVER SURFACE and MOSES.]

SIR PET. So, now, I think Sir Oliver will be convinced. You are partial, Rowley, and would have prepared Charles for the other plot.

ROW. No, upon my word, Sir Peter.

SIR PET. Well, go bring me this Snake, and I'll hear what he has to say presently. I see Maria, and want to speak with her. [Exit ROWLEY.] I should be glad to be convinced my suspicions of Lady Teazle and Charles were unjust. I have never yet opened my mind on this subject to my friend Joseph—I am determined I will do it; he will give me his opinion sincerely.

[Enter MARIA.]

—So, child, has Mr. Surface returned with you?

MARIA. No, sir; he was engaged.

SIR PET. Well, Maria, do you not reflect, the more you converse with that amiable young man, what return his partiality for you deserves?

MARIA. Indeed, Sir Peter, your frequent importunity on this subject distresses me extremely. You compel me to declare that I know no man who has ever paid me a particular attention whom I would not prefer to Mr. Surface.

SIR PET. So—here's perverseness!—No, no, Maria, 'tis Charles only whom you would prefer. 'Tis evident his vices and follies have won your heart.

MARIA. This is unkind, sir. You know I have obeyed you in neither seeing nor corresponding with him; I have heard enough to convince me that he is unworthy my regard. Yet I cannot think it culpable if, while my understanding severely condemns his

vices, my heart suggests some pity for his distresses.

SIR PET. Well, well, pity him as much as you please, but give your heart and hand to a worthier object.

MARIA. Never to his brother!

SIR PET. Go, perverse and obstinate! But take care, madam: you have never yet known what the authority of a guardian is; don't compel me to inform you of it.

MARIA. I can only say, you shall not have just reason. 'Tis true, by my father's will I am for a short period bound to regard you as his substitute, but must cease to think you so when you would compel me to be miserable.

[Exit MARIA.]

SIR PET. Was ever man so crossed as I am! everything conspiring to fret me! I had not been involved in matrimony a fortnight before her father, a hale and hearty man, died on purpose, I believe, for the pleasure of plaguing me with the care of his daughter.—But here comes my helpmate! She appears in great good humor. How happy I should be if I could tease her into loving me, though but a little!

[Enter LADY TEAZLE.]

LADY T. Lud! Sir Peter, I hope you haven't been quarrelling with Maria? It is not using me well to be ill-humored when I am not by.

SIR PET. Ah, Lady Teazle, you might have the power to make me good-humored at all times.

LADY T. I am sure I wish I had, for I want you to be in a charming sweet temper at this moment. Do be good-humored now and let me have two hundred pounds, will you?

SIR PET. Two hundred pounds! what, an't I to be in a good humor without paying for it? But speak to me thus and, i'faith, there's nothing I could refuse you. You shall have it, but seal me a bond for the repayment.

LADY T. [offering her hand.] Oh, no—there—my note of hand will do as well.

SIR PET. And you shall no longer reproach me with not giving you an in-

dependent settlement; I mean shortly to surprise you. But shall we always live thus, hey?

LADY T. If you please. I'm sure I don't care how soon we leave off quarrelling, provided you'll own you were tired first.

SIR PET. Well—then let our future contest be, who shall be most obliging.

LADY T. I assure you, Sir Peter, good nature becomes you. You look now as you did before we were married, when you used to walk with me under the elms and tell me stories of what a gallant you were in your youth; and chuck me under the chin, you would, and ask me if I thought I could love an old fellow who would deny me nothing—didn't you?

SIR PET. Yes, yes, and you were as kind and attentive—

LADY T. Aye, so I was, and would always take your part when my acquaintance used to abuse you and turn you into ridicule.

SIR PET. Indeed!

LADY T. Aye, and when my cousin Sophy has called you a stiff, peevish old bachelor, and laughed at me for thinking of marrying one who might be my father, I have always defended you and said I didn't think you so ugly by any means and I dared say you'd make a very good sort of a husband.

SIR PET. And you prophesied right; and we shall now be the happiest couple—

LADY T. And never differ again?

SIR PET. No, never!—though at the same time, indeed, my dear Lady Teazle, you must watch your temper very seriously; for in all our little quarrels, my dear, if you recollect, my love, you always began first.

LADY T. I beg your pardon, my dear Sir Peter; indeed, you always gave the provocation.

SIR PET. Now see, my angel! take care—contradicting isn't the way to keep friends.

LADY T. Then don't you begin it, my love!

SIR PET. There now! you—you are going on. You don't perceive, my life,

that you are just doing the very thing which you know always makes me angry.

LADY T. Nay, you know if you will be angry without any reason, my dear—

SIR PET. There! now you want to quarrel again.

LADY T. No, I'm sure I don't, but if you will be so peevish—

SIR PET. There now! who begins first?

LADY T. Why, you, to be sure. I said nothing—but there's no bearing your temper.

SIR PET. No, no, madam, the fault's in your own temper.

LADY T. Aye, you are just what my cousin Sophy said you would be.

SIR PET. Your cousin Sophy is a forward, impertinent gipsy.

LADY T. You are a great bear, I'm sure, to abuse my relations.

SIR PET. Now may all the plagues of marriage be doubled on me if ever I try to be friends with you any more!

LADY T. So much the better.

SIR PET. No, no, madam: 'tis evident you never cared a pin for me, and I was a madman to marry you—a pert, rural coquette that had refused half the honest 'squires in the neighborhood.

LADY T. And I am sure I was a fool to marry you—an old dangling bachelor who was single at fifty only because he never could meet with anyone who would have him.

SIR PET. Aye, aye, madam, but you were pleased enough to listen to me, you never had such an offer before.

LADY T. No! didn't I refuse Sir Tivy Terrier, who everybody said would have been a better match? for his estate is just as good as yours, and he has broke his neck since we have been married.

SIR PET. I have done with you, madam! You are an unfeeling, ungrateful—but there's an end of everything. I believe you capable of everything that is bad. Yes, madam, I now believe the reports relative to you and Charles, madam. Yes, madam, you and Charles are, not without grounds—

LADY T. Take care, Sir Peter! you had better not insinuate any such thing! I'll not be suspected without cause, I promise you.

SIR PET. Very well, madam! very well! A separate maintenance as soon as you please.—Yes, madam, or a divorce! I'll make an example of myself for the benefit of all old bachelors. Let us separate, madam!

LADY T. Agreed! agreed! And now, my dear Sir Peter, we are of a mind once more, we may be the happiest couple and never differ again, you know—ha! ha! ha! Well, you are going to be in a passion, I see, and I shall only interrupt you—so, bye! bye!

[Exit.]

SIR PET. Plagues and tortures! can't I make her angry either! Oh, I am the most miserable fellow! But I'll not bear her presuming to keep her temper—no! she may break my heart, but she shan't keep her temper.

[Exit.]

SCENE II.

A Room in CHARLES SURFACE'S House

[Enter TRIP, MOSES, and SIR OLIVER SURFACE.]

TRIP. Here, Master Moses! if you'll stay a moment, I'll try whether—what's the gentleman's name?

SIR O. [aside.] Mr. Moses, what is my name?

MOSES. Mr. Premium.

TRIP. Premium—very well.

[Exit TRIP, taking snuff.]

SIR O. To judge by the servants, one wouldn't believe the master was ruined. But what!—sure, this was my brother's house?

MOSES. Yes, sir; Mr. Charles bought it of Mr. Joseph, with the furniture, pictures, etc., just as the old gentleman left it. Sir Peter thought it a piece of extravagance in him.

SIR O. In my mind, the other's economy in selling it to him was more reprehensible by half.

[Re-enter TRIP.]

TRIP. My master says you must wait, gentlemen; he has company and can't speak with you yet.

SIR O. If he knew who it was wanted to see him, perhaps he would not send such a message.

TRIP. Yes, yes, sir; he knows you are here—I did not forget little Premium. No, no, no!

SIR O. Very well; and I pray, sir, what may be your name?

TRIP. Trip, sir; my name is Trip, at your service.

SIR O. Well, then, Mr. Trip, you have a pleasant sort of place here, I guess?

TRIP. Why, yes—here are three or four of us pass our time agreeably enough; but then our wages are sometimes a little in arrear—and not very great either—but fifty pounds a year, and find our own bags³⁰ and bouquets.

SIR O. [aside.] Bags and bouquets? halters and bastinadoes!

TRIP. And à propos, Moses, have you been able to get me that little bill discounted?

SIR O. [aside.] Wants to raise money too!—mercy on me! Has his distresses too, I warrant, like a lord, and affects creditors and duns.

MOSES. 'Twas not to be done, indeed, Mr. Trip.

TRIP. Good lack, you surprise me! My friend Brush has indorsed it, and I thought when he put his name at the back of a bill 'twas the same as cash.

MOSES. No, 'twouldn't do.

TRIP. A small sum—but twenty pounds. Hark'ee, Moses, do you think you couldn't get it me by way of annuity?

SIR O. [aside.] An annuity! ha! ha! a footman raise money by way of annuity! Well done, luxury, egad!

MOSES. Well, but you must insure your place.

TRIP. Oh, with all my heart! I'll insure my place, and my life too, if you please.

³⁰ for the hair.

SIR O. [*aside.*] It's more than I would your neck.

MOSES. But is there nothing you could deposit?

TRIP. Why, nothing capital of my master's wardrobe has dropped lately, but I could give you a mortgage on some of his winter clothes, with equity of redemption before November—or you shall have the reversion of the French velvet, or a post-obit²¹ on the blue and silver;—these, I should think, Moses, with a few pair of point ruffles as a collateral security—hey, my little fellow?

MOSES. Well, well. [*Bell rings.*]

TRIP. Egad, I heard the bell! I believe, gentlemen, I can now introduce you. Don't forget the annuity, little Moses!—This way, gentlemen.—I'll insure my place, you know.

SIR O. [*aside.*] If the man be a shadow of the master, this is the temple of dissipation indeed! [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.

Another Room in the Same

[CHARLES SURFACE and his friends at a table with wine, etc.]

CHARLES. 'Fore Heaven, 'tis true!—there's the great degeneracy of the age. Many of our acquaintance have taste, spirit, and politeness, but, plague on't, they won't drink.

CARE. It is so indeed, Charles! they give in to all the substantial luxuries of the table, and abstain from nothing but wine and wit. Oh, certainly society suffers by it intolerably! for now, instead of the social spirit of raillery that used to mantle over a glass of bright Burgundy, their conversation is become just like the Spa water they drink, which has all the pertness and flatulence of champagne without the spirit or flavor.

1ST GENT. But what are they to do who love play better than wine?

²¹ a note or bond given by an heir payable on the death of the person whose fortune he expects to inherit.

CARE. True! there's Sir Harry diets himself for gaming, and is now under a hazard regimen.

CHARLES. Then he'll have the worst of it. What! you wouldn't train a horse for the course by keeping him from corn? For my part, egad, I am never so successful as when I am a little merry; let me throw on a bottle of champagne, and I never lose—at least I never feel my losses, which is exactly the same thing.

2D GENT. Aye, that I believe.

CHARLES. And then, what man can pretend to be a believer in love who is an abjurer of wine? 'Tis the test by which the lover knows his own heart. Fill a dozen bumpers to a dozen beauties, and she that floats a-top is the maid that has bewitched you.

CARE. Now then, Charles, be honest and give us your real favorite.

CHARLES. Why, I have withheld her only in compassion to you. If I toast her, you must give a round of her peers, which is impossible—on earth.

CARE. Oh! then we'll find some canonised vestals or heathen goddesses that will do, I warrant!

CHARLES. Here then, bumpers, you rogues! bumpers! Maria! Maria!—

SIR H. Maria who?

CHARLES. Oh, damn the surname!—'tis too formal to be registered in Love's calendar.—But now, Sir Harry, beware, we must have beauty superlative.

CARE. Nay, never study,³² Sir Harry; we'll stand to the toast though your mistress should want an eye, and you know you have a song will excuse you.

SIR H. Egad, so I have! and I'll give him the song instead of the lady.

[*Sings.*]

SONG

Here's to the maiden of bashful fifteen;

Here's to the widow of fifty;

Here's to the flaunting extravagant quean,
And here's to the housewife that's thrifty.

³² never fear.

CHORUS.

Let the toast pass,—
 Drink to the lass,
 I'll warrant she'll prove an excuse for the
 glass.

Here's to the charmer whose dimples we
 prize;

Now to the maid who has none, sir;
 Here's to the girl with a pair of blue eyes,
 And here's to the nymph with but one,
 sir.

CHORUS.

Let the toast pass, etc.

Here's to the maid with a bosom of snow;
 Now to her that's as brown as a berry;
 Here's to the wife with a face full of woe,
 And now to the damsel that's merry.

CHORUS.

Let the toast pass, etc.

For let 'em be clumsy, or let 'em be slim,
 Young or ancient, I care not a feather;
 So fill a pint bumper quite up to the brim,
 So fill up your glasses—nay, fill to the
 brim—

And let us e'en toast them together.

CHORUS.

Let the toast pass, etc.

ALL. Bravo! bravo!

[Enter TRIP and whispers CHARLES
 SURFACE.]

CHARLES. Gentlemen, you must excuse me a little.—Careless, take the chair, will you?

CARE. Nay, prithee, Charles, what now? This is one of your peerless beauties, I suppose, has dropped in by chance?

CHARLES. No, faith! To tell you the truth, 'tis a Jew and a broker, who are come by appointment.

CARE. Oh, damn it! let's have the Jew in.

1ST GENT. Aye, and the broker too, by all means.

2D GENT. Yes, yes, the Jew and the broker.

CHARLES. Egad, with all my heart!—Trip, bid the gentlemen walk in.

[Exit TRIP.]

—Though there's one of them a stranger, I can tell you.

CARE. Charles, let us give them some generous Burgundy, and perhaps they'll grow conscientious.

CHARLES. Oh, hang 'em, no! wine does but draw forth a man's natural

qualities, and to make them drink would only be to whet their knavery.

[Re-enter TRIP, with SIR OLIVER SURFACE and MOSES.]

CHARLES. So, honest Moses, walk in; walk in, pray, Mr. Premium—that's the gentleman's name, isn't it, Moses?

MOSES. Yes, sir.

CHARLES. Set chairs, Trip.—Sit down, Mr. Premium.—Glasses, Trip.

[TRIP gives chairs and glasses, and exit.]

—Sit down, Moses.—Come, Mr. Premium, I'll give you a sentiment; here's *Success to usury!*—Moses, fill the gentlemen a bumper.

MOSES. Success to usury! [Drinks.]

CARE. Right, Moses—usury is prudence and industry, and deserves to succeed.

SIR O. Then—here's all the success it deserves! [Drinks.]

CARE. No, no, that won't do! Mr. Premium, you have demurred at the toast and must drink it in a pint bumper.

1ST GENT. A pint bumper, at least.

MOSES. Oh, pray, sir, consider—Mr. Premium's a gentleman.

CARE. And therefore loves good wine.

2D GENT. Give Moses a quart glass—this is mutiny, and a high contempt for the chair.

CARE. Here, now for't! I'll see justice done, to the last drop of my bottle.

SIR O. Nay, pray, gentlemen—I did not expect this usage.

CHARLES. No, hang it, you shan't; Mr. Premium's a stranger.

SIR O. [aside.] Odd! I wish I was well out of their company.

CARE. Plague on 'em then! if they won't drink, we'll not sit down with them. Come, Harry, the dice are in the next room.—Charles, you'll join us when you have finished your business with the gentlemen?

CHARLES. I will! I will!

[Exeunt SIR HARRY BUMPER and GENTLEMEN, CARELESS following.]

—Careless!

CARE. [*returning.*] Well!

CHARLES. Perhaps I may want you.

CARE. Oh, you know I am always ready; word, note, or bond, 'tis all the same to me. [*Exit.*]

MOSES. Sir, this is Mr. Premium, a gentleman of the strictest honor and secrecy, and always performs what he undertakes. Mr. Premium, this is—

CHARLES. Pshaw! have done. Sir, my friend Moses is a very honest fellow, but a little slow at expression; he'll be an hour giving us our titles. Mr. Premium, the plain state of the matter is this: I am an extravagant young fellow who wants to borrow money; you I take to be a prudent old fellow who have got money to lend. I am blockhead enough to give fifty per cent sooner than not have it; and you, I presume, are rogue enough to take a hundred if you can get it. Now, sir, you see we are acquainted at once, and may proceed to business without farther ceremony.

SIR O. Exceeding frank, upon my word. I see, sir, you are not a man of many compliments.

CHARLES. Oh, no, sir! plain dealing in business I always think best.

SIR O. Sir, I like you the better for it. However, you are mistaken in one thing; I have no money to lend, but I believe I could procure some of a friend—but then, he's an unconscionable dog. Isn't he, Moses?

MOSES. But you can't help that.

SIR O. And must sell stock to accommodate you—mustn't he, Moses?

MOSES. Yes, indeed! You know I always speak the truth and scorn to tell a lie.

CHARLES. Right. People that speak truth generally do. But these are trifles, Mr. Premium. What! I know money isn't to be bought without paying for't.

SIR O. Well, but what security could you give? You have no land, I suppose?

CHARLES. Not a mole-hill nor a twig but what's in the bough-pots out of the window.

SIR O. Nor any stock, I presume?

CHARLES. Nothing but live stock—and that only a few pointers and ponies. But pray, Mr. Premium, are you acquainted at all with any of my connections?

SIR O. Why, to say truth, I am.

CHARLES. Then you must know that I have a dev'lish rich uncle in the East Indies, Sir Oliver Surface, from whom I have the greatest expectations?

SIR O. That you have a wealthy uncle, I have heard, but how your expectations will turn out is more, I believe, than you can tell.

CHARLES. Oh, no!—there can be no doubt. They tell me I'm a prodigious favorite, and that he talks of leaving me everything.

SIR O. Indeed! this is the first I've heard of it.

CHARLES. Yes, yes, 'tis just so. Moses knows 'tis true; don't you, Moses?

MOSES. Oh, yes! I'll swear to't.

SIR O. [*aside.*] Egad, they'll persuade me presently I'm at Bengal.

CHARLES. Now I propose, Mr. Premium, if it's agreeable to you, a post-obit on Sir Oliver's life—though at the same time the old fellow has been so liberal to me that I give you my word, I should be very sorry to hear that anything had happened to him.

SIR O. Not more than I should, I assure you. But the bond you mention happens to be just the worst security you could offer me—for I might live to a hundred and never see the principal.

CHARLES. Oh, yes, you would! the moment Sir Oliver dies, you know, you would come on me for the money.

SIR O. Then I believe I should be the most unwelcome dun you ever had in your life.

CHARLES. What! I suppose you're afraid that Sir Oliver is too good a life?

SIR O. No, indeed I am not—though I have heard he is as hale and healthy as any man of his years in christendom.

CHARLES. There again, now, you are misinformed. No, no, the climate has

hurt him considerably, poor Uncle Oliver. Yes, yes, he breaks apace, I'm told—and is so much altered lately that his nearest relations don't know him.

SIR O. No! Ha! ha! ha! so much altered lately that his nearest relations would not know him! Ha! ha! ha! egad—ha! ha! ha!

CHARLES. Ha! ha!—you're glad to hear that, little Premium?

SIR O. No, no, I'm not.

CHARLES. Yes, yes, you are—ha! ha! ha!—you know that mends your chance.

SIR O. But I'm told Sir Oliver is coming over; nay, some say he is actually arrived.

CHARLES. Pshaw! sure I must know better than you whether he's come or not. No, no, rely on't he's at this moment at Calcutta. Isn't he, Moses?

MOSES. Oh, yes, certainly.

SIR O. Very true, as you say, you must know better than I, though I have it from pretty good authority—haven't I, Moses?

MOSES. Yes, most undoubtedly!

SIR O. But, sir, as I understand you want a few hundreds immediately, is there nothing you could dispose of?

CHARLES. How do you mean?

SIR O. For instance, now, I have heard that your father left behind him a great quantity of massy old plate.

CHARLES. O lud! that's gone long ago. Moses can tell you how better than I can.

SIR O. [*aside.*] Good lack! all the family race-cups and corporation-bowls!—[*aloud.*] Then it was also supposed that his library was one of the most valuable and compact—

CHARLES. Yes, yes, so it was—vastly too much so for a private gentleman. For my part, I was always of a communicative disposition; so I thought it a shame to keep so much knowledge to myself.

SIR O. [*aside.*] Mercy upon me! learning that had run in the family like an heirloom!—[*aloud.*] Pray, what are become of the books?

CHARLES. You must inquire of the auctioneer, Master Premium, for I

don't believe even Moses can direct you.

MOSES. I know nothing of books.

SIR O. So, so, nothing of the family property left, I suppose?

CHARLES. Not much, indeed, unless you have a mind to the family pictures. I have got a room full of ancestors above, and if you have a taste for old paintings, egad, you shall have 'em a bargain.

SIR O. Hey! what the devil! sure, you wouldn't sell your forefathers, would you?

CHARLES. Every man of them, to the best bidder.

SIR O. What! your great-uncles and aunts?

CHARLES. Aye, and my great-grandfathers and grandmothers too.

SIR O. [*aside.*] Now I give him up!—[*aloud.*] What the plague, have you no bowels for your own kindred? Odds life! do you take me for Shylock in the play, that you would raise money of me on your own flesh and blood?

CHARLES. Nay, my little broker, don't be angry; what need you care, if you have your money's worth?

SIR O. Well, I'll be the purchaser; I think I can dispose of the family canvas.—[*aside.*] Oh, I'll never forgive him this!—never!

[*Re-enter CARELESS.*]

CARE. Come, Charles, what keeps you?

CHARLES. I can't come yet. I'faith, we are going to have a sale above stairs; here's little Premium will buy all my ancestors!

CARE. Oh, burn your ancestors!

CHARLES. No, he may do that afterwards if he pleases. Stay, Careless, we want you: egad, you shall be auctioneer—so come along with us.

CARE. Oh, have with you, if that's the case.—[I can] handle a hammer as well as a dice-box!

SIR O. [*aside.*] Oh, the profligates!

CHARLES. Come, Moses, you shall be appraiser if we want one. Gad's life, little Premium, you don't seem to like the business?

SIR O. Oh, yes, I do, vastly! Ha! ha! ha! yes, yes, I think it a rare joke to sell one's family by auction—ha! ha! —[*aside.*] Oh, the prodigal!

CHARLES. To be sure! when a man wants money, where the plague should he get assistance if he can't make free with his own relations? [*Exeunt.*]

ACT IV

SCENE I.

Picture Room at CHARLES SURFACE'S House

[*Enter CHARLES SURFACE, SIR OLIVER SURFACE, MOSES, and CARELESS.*]

CHARLES. Walk in, gentlemen, pray walk in; here they are, the family of the Surfaces up to the Conquest.

SIR O. And in my opinion a goodly collection.

CHARLES. Aye, aye, these are done in the true spirit of portrait-painting; no *volontaire grâce*³³ or expression. Not like the works of your modern Raphaels, who give you the strongest resemblance, yet contrive³⁴ to make your portrait independent of you, so that you may sink the original and not hurt the picture. No, no; the merit of these is the inveterate likeness—all stiff and awkward as the originals, and like nothing in human nature besides.

SIR O. Ah! we shall never see such figures of men again.

CHARLES. I hope not. Well, you see, Master Premium, what a domestic character I am; here I sit of an evening surrounded by my family.—But come, get to your pulpit, Mr. Auctioneer; here's an old gouty chair of my grandfather's will answer the purpose.

CARE. Aye, aye, this will do. But, Charles, I haven't a hammer; and what's an auctioneer without his hammer?

CHARLES. Egad, that's true. What parchment have we here? Oh, our genealogy in full. Here, Careless, you shall have no common bit of mahogany;

here's the family tree for you, you rogue! This shall be your hammer, and now you may knock down my ancestors with their own pedigree.

SIR O. [*aside.*] What an unnatural rogue!—an *ex post facto*³⁵ parricide!

CARE. Yes, yes, here's a list of your generation, indeed;—faith, Charles, this is the most convenient thing you could have found for the business, for 'twill not only serve as a hammer but a catalogue into the bargain. Come, begin—A-going, a-going, a-going!

CHARLES. Bravo! Careless! Well, here's my great-uncle, Sir Richard Raveline, a marvellous good general in his day, I assure you. He served in all the Duke of Marlborough's wars and got that cut over his eye at the battle of Malplaquet.³⁶ What say you, Mr. Premium? look at him—there's a hero! not cut out of his feathers, as your modern clipped captains are, but enveloped in wig and regimentals, as a general should be. What do you bid?

MOSES. Mr. Premium would have you speak.

CHARLES. Why, then, he shall have him for ten pounds, and I'm sure that's not dear for a staff officer.

SIR O. [*aside.*] Heaven deliver me! his famous uncle Richard for ten pounds!—Very well, sir, I take him at that.

CHARLES. Careless, knock down my uncle Richard.—Here, now, is a maiden sister of his, my great-aunt Deborah, done by Kneller, thought to be in his best manner and esteemed a very formidable likeness. There she is, you see, a shepherdess feeding her flock. You shall have her for five pounds ten—the sheep are worth the money.

SIR O. [*aside.*] Ah! poor Deborah!—a woman who set such a value on herself!—Five pounds ten—she's mine.

CHARLES. Knock down my aunt Deborah! Here, now, are two that were a sort of cousins of theirs.—You see, Moses, these pictures were done some time ago, when beaux wore wigs and the ladies their own hair.

³⁵ retroactive.

³⁶ Here the French were beaten in 1709.

³³ i.e. added charm. ³⁴ Q₁ contrives.

SIR O. Yes, truly, head-dresses appear to have been a little lower in those days.

CHARLES. Well, take that couple for the same.

MOSES. 'Tis [a] good bargain.

CHARLES. Careless!—This, now, is a grandfather of my mother's, a learned judge, well known on the western circuit.—What do you rate him at, Moses?

MOSES. Four guineas.

CHARLES. Four guineas! Gad's life, you don't bid me the price of his wig.—Mr. Premium, you have more respect for the woolsack; ³⁷ do let us knock his lordship down at fifteen.

SIR O. By all means.

CARE. Gone!

CHARLES. And there are two brothers of his, William and Walter Blunt, Esquires, both members of Parliament and noted speakers; and, what's very extraordinary, I believe, this is the first time they were ever bought or sold.

SIR O. That is very extraordinary, indeed! I'll take them at your own price, for the honor of Parliament.

CARE. Well said, little Premium! I'll knock them down at forty.

CHARLES. Here's a jolly fellow—I don't know what relation, but he was mayor of Manchester: take him at eight pounds.

SIR O. No, no; six will do for the mayor.

CHARLES. Come, make it guineas, and I'll throw you the two aldermen there into the bargain.

SIR O. They're mine.

CHARLES. Careless, knock down the mayor and aldermen. But, plague on't! we shall be all day retailing in this manner; do let us deal wholesale. What say you, little Premium? Give me three hundred pounds for the rest of the family in the lump.

CARE. Aye, aye, that will be the best way.

SIR O. Well, well, anything to accommodate you; they are mine. But

³⁷ seat of the Lord Chancellor.

there is one portrait which you have always passed over.

CARE. What, that ill-looking little fellow over the settee?

SIR O. Yes sir, I mean that—though I don't think him so ill-looking a little fellow, by any means.

CHARLES. What, that?—Oh, that's my uncle Oliver! 'twas done before he went to India.

CARE. Your uncle Oliver! Gad, then you'll never be friends, Charles. That, now, to me, is as stern a looking rogue as ever I saw—an unforgiving eye, and a damned disinheriting countenance!—an inveterate knave, depend on't. Don't you think so, little Premium?

SIR O. Upon my soul, sir, I do not; I think it is as honest a looking face as any in the room, dead or alive. But I suppose uncle Oliver goes with the rest of the lumber?

CHARLES. No, hang it; I'll not part with poor Noll. The old fellow has been very good to me and, egad, I'll keep his picture while I've a room to put it in.

SIR O. [*aside.*] The rogue's my nephew after all!—But, sir, I have somehow taken a fancy to that picture.

CHARLES. I'm sorry for't, for you certainly will not have it. Oons, haven't you got enough of them?

SIR O. [*aside.*] I forgive him everything!—But, sir, when I take a whim in my head, I don't value money. I'll give you as much for that as for all the rest.

CHARLES. Don't tease me, master broker; I tell you I'll not part with it, and there's an end of it.

SIR O. [*aside.*] How like his father the dog is!—Well, well, I have done.—[*aside.*] I did not perceive it before, but I think I never saw such a striking resemblance.—Here is a draft for your sum.

CHARLES. Why, 'tis for eight hundred pounds!

SIR O. You will not let Sir Oliver go?

CHARLES. Zounds! no! I tell you once more.

SIR O. Then never mind the differ-

ence; we'll balance that another time. But give me your hand on the bargain. You are an honest fellow, Charles—I beg pardon, sir, for being so free.—Come, Moses.

CHARLES. Egad, this is a whimsical old fellow!—But hark'ee, Premium, you'll prepare lodgings for these gentlemen.

SIR O. Yes, yes, I'll send for them in a day or two.

CHARLES. But hold; do now send a genteel conveyance for them, for I assure you, they were most of them used to ride in their own carriages.

SIR O. I will, I will—for all but Oliver.

CHARLES. Aye, all but the little nabob.

SIR O. You're fixed on that?

CHARLES. Peremptorily.

SIR O. [*aside.*] A dear extravagant rogue!—Good day!—Come, Moses.—
[*aside.*] Let me hear now who dares call him profligate!

[*Exeunt* SIR OLIVER SURFACE and MOSES.]

CARE. Why, this is the oddest genius of the sort I ever saw!

CHARLES. Egad, he's the prince of brokers, I think. I wonder how Moses got acquainted with so honest a fellow.—Hah, here's Rowley.—Do, Careless, say I'll join the company in a few moments.

CARE. I will—but don't let that old blockhead persuade you to squander any of that money on old musty debts, or any such nonsense; for tradesmen, Charles, are the most exorbitant fellows.

CHARLES. Very true, and paying them is only encouraging them.

CARE. Nothing else.

CHARLES. Aye, aye, never fear.

[*Exit* CARELESS.]

—So! this was an odd old fellow, indeed. Let me see, two-thirds of this is mine by right—five hundred and thirty odd pounds. 'Fore Heaven! I find one's ancestors are more valuable relations than I took them for!—Ladies and gentlemen, your most obedient and very grateful servant. [Bows.]

[*Enter* ROWLEY.]

—Ha! old Rowley! egad, you are just come in time to take leave of your old acquaintance.

ROW. Yes, I heard they were a-going. But I wonder you can have such spirits under so many distresses.

CHARLES. Why, there's the point! my distresses are so many that I can't afford to part with my spirits; but I shall be rich and splenetic, all in good time. However, I suppose you are surprised that I am not more sorrowful at parting with so many near relations, to be sure, 'tis very affecting, but you see they never move a muscle, so why should I?

ROW. There's no making you serious a moment.

CHARLES. Yes, faith, I am so now. Here, my honest Rowley—here, get me this changed directly, and take a hundred pounds of it immediately to old Stanley.

ROW. A hundred pounds! Consider only—

CHARLES. Gad's life, don't talk about it! poor Stanley's wants are pressing, and if you don't make haste we shall have someone call that has a better right to the money.

ROW. Ah! there's the point! I never will cease dunning you with the old proverb—

CHARLES. "Be just before you're generous."—Why, so I would if I could, but Justice is an old, hobbling beldame, and I can't get her to keep pace with Generosity, for the soul of me.

ROW. Yet, Charles, believe me, one hour's reflection—

CHARLES. Aye, aye, it's all very true; but, hark'ee, Rowley, while I have, by Heaven, I'll give; so, damn your economy—and now for hazard.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.

The Parlor

[*Enter* SIR OLIVER SURFACE and MOSES.]

MOSES. Well, sir, I think, as Sir Peter said, you have seen Mr. Charles

in high glory; 'tis great pity he's so extravagant.

SIR O. True, but he would not sell my picture.

MOSES. And loves wine and women so much.

SIR O. But he would not sell my picture.

MOSES. And games so deep.

SIR O. But he would not sell my picture!—Oh, here's Rowley.

[Enter ROWLEY.]

Row. So, Sir Oliver, I find you have made a purchase—

SIR O. Yes, yes, our young rake has parted with his ancestors like old tapestry.

Row. And here has he commissioned me to re-deliver you part of the purchase money—I mean, though, in your necessitous character of old Stanley.

MOSES. Ah! there is the pity of all; he is so damned charitable.

Row. And I left a hosier and two tailors in the hall, who, I'm sure, won't be paid, and this hundred would satisfy them.

SIR O. Well, well, I'll pay his debts and his benevolence too. But now I am no more a broker, and you shall introduce me to the elder brother as old Stanley.

Row. Not yet awhile; Sir Peter, I know, means to call there about this time.

[Enter TRIP.]

TRIP. Oh, gentlemen, I beg pardon for not showing you out; this way—Moses, a word.

[Exeunt TRIP and MOSES.]

SIR O. There's a fellow for you! Would you believe it, that puppy intercepted the Jew on our coming and wanted to raise money before he got to his master!

Row. Indeed!

SIR O. Yes; they are now planning an annuity business. Ah, Master Rowley, in my days servants were content with the follies of their masters when they were worn a little thread-bare; but now they have their vices,

like their birthday clothes, with the gloss on. [Exeunt.]

SCENE III.

A Library in JOSEPH SURFACE's House

[Enter JOSEPH SURFACE and SERVANT.]

JOSEPH. No letter from Lady Teazle?

SERV. No, sir.

JOSEPH [*aside*]. I am surprised she has not sent if she is prevented from coming. Sir Peter certainly does not suspect me. Yet I wish I may not lose the heiress through the scrape I have drawn myself into with the wife; however, Charles's imprudence and bad character are great points in my favor.

[Knocking without.]

SERV. Sir, I believe that must be Lady Teazle.

JOSEPH. Hold! See whether it is or not before you go to the door. I have a particular message for you if it should be my brother.

SERV. 'Tis her ladyship, sir; she always leaves her chair at the milliner's in the next street.

JOSEPH. Stay, stay; draw that screen before the window—that will do. My opposite neighbor is a maiden lady of so curious a temper.

[SERVANT draws the screen, and exit.] I have a difficult hand to play in this affair. Lady Teazle has lately suspected my views on Maria, but she must by no means be let into that secret—at least till I have her more in my power.

[Enter LADY TEAZLE.]

LADY T. What, sentiment in soliloquy now? Have you been very impatient? O lud! don't pretend to look grave. I vow I couldn't come before.

JOSEPH. O madam, punctuality is a species of constancy very unfashionable in a lady of quality.

LADY T. Upon my word, you ought to pity me. Do you know Sir Peter is grown so ill-natured to me of late, and so jealous of Charles, too—that's the best of the story, isn't it?

JOSEPH [*aside*.] I am glad my scandalous friends keep that up.

LADY T. I am sure I wish he would let Maria marry him, and then perhaps he would be convinced; don't you, Mr. Surface?

JOSEPH [*aside*.] Indeed I do not.—Oh, certainly I do! for then my dear Lady Teazle would also be convinced how wrong her suspicions were of my having any design on the silly girl.

LADY T. Well, well, I'm inclined to believe you. But isn't it provoking to have the most ill-natured things said of one? And there's my friend Lady Sneerwell has circulated I don't know how many scandalous tales of me, and all without any foundation too; that's what vexes me.

JOSEPH. Aye, madam, to be sure, that is the provoking circumstance—without foundation; yes, yes, there's the mortification, indeed, for when a scandalous story is believed against one, there certainly is no comfort like the consciousness of having deserved it.

LADY T. No, to be sure; then I'd forgive their malice. But to attack me, who am really so innocent, and who never say an ill-natured thing of anybody—that is, of any friend; and then Sir Peter, too, to have him so peevish, and so suspicious, when I know the integrity of my own heart—indeed, 'tis monstrous!

JOSEPH. But, my dear Lady Teazle, 'tis your own fault if you suffer it. When a husband entertains a groundless suspicion of his wife and withdraws his confidence from her, the original compact is broken and she owes it to the honor of her sex to outwit him.

LADY T. Indeed! so that if he suspects me without cause, it follows that the best way of curing his jealousy is to give him reason for't?

JOSEPH. Undoubtedly—for your husband should never be deceived in you, and in that case it becomes you to be frail in compliment to his discernment.

LADY T. To be sure, what you say is very reasonable, and when the consciousness of my innocence—

JOSEPH. Ah, my dear madam, there is the great mistake! 'tis this very conscious innocence that is of the greatest prejudice to you. What is it makes you negligent of forms and careless of the world's opinion? why, the consciousness of your own innocence. What makes you thoughtless in your conduct and apt to run into a thousand little imprudences? why, the consciousness of your own innocence. What makes you impatient of Sir Peter's temper and outrageous at his suspicions? why, the consciousness of your innocence.

LADY T. 'Tis very true!

JOSEPH. Now, my dear Lady Teazle, if you would but once make a trifling *faux pas*, you can't conceive how cautious you would grow, and how ready to humor and agree with your husband.

LADY T. Do you think so?

JOSEPH. Oh, I am sure on't; and then you would find all scandal would cease at once, for—in short, your character at present is like a person in a plethora, absolutely dying from too much health.

LADY T. So, so; then I perceive your prescription is that I must sin in my own defence and part with my virtue to preserve my reputation?

JOSEPH. Exactly so, upon my credit, ma'am.

LADY T. Well, certainly this is the oddest doctrine and the newest receipt for avoiding calumny!

JOSEPH. An infallible one, believe me. Prudence, like experience, must be paid for.

LADY T. Why, if my understanding were once convinced—

JOSEPH. Oh, certainly, madam, your understanding should be convinced. Yes, yes—Heaven forbid I should persuade you to do anything you thought wrong. No, no, I have too much honor to desire it.

LADY T. Don't you think we may as well leave honor out of the argument?

JOSEPH. Ah, the ill effects of your country education, I see, still remain with you.

LADY T. I doubt they do, indeed;

and I will fairly own to you that if I could be persuaded to do wrong, it would be by Sir Peter's ill usage sooner than your *honorable logic*, after all.

JOSEPH. [*taking her hand.*] Then, by this hand, which he is unworthy of—

[*Re-enter SERVANT.*]

—'Sdeath, you blockhead—what do you want?

SERV. I beg your pardon, sir, but I thought you would not choose Sir Peter to come up without announcing him.

JOSEPH. Sir Peter!—Oons—the devil!

LADY T. Sir Peter! O lud!—I'm ruined! I'm ruined!

SERV. Sir, 'twasn't I let him in.

LADY T. Oh! I'm quite undone! What will become of me?—Now, Mr. Logic—Oh! mercy, sir, he's on the stairs—I'll get behind here—and if ever I'm so imprudent again—

[*Goes behind the screen.*]

JOSEPH. Give me that book.

[*Sits down. SERVANT pretends to adjust his chair.*]

[*Enter SIR PETER.*]

SIR PET. Aye, ever improving himself—Mr. Surface, Mr. Surface—

JOSEPH. Oh, my dear Sir Peter, I beg your pardon—[*gaping, throws away the book.*] I have been dozing over a stupid book. Well, I am much obliged to you for this call. You haven't been here, I believe, since I fitted up this room. Books, you know, are the only things in which I am a coxcomb.

SIR PET. 'Tis very neat, indeed. Well, well, that's proper; and you can make even your screen a source of knowledge—hung, I perceive, with maps.

JOSEPH. Oh, yes, I find great use in that screen.

SIR PET. I dare say you must, certainly, when you want to find anything in a hurry:

JOSEPH. [*aside.*] Aye, or to hide anything in a hurry either.

SIR PET. Well, I have a little private business—

JOSEPH. [*to the SERVANT.*] You need not stay.

SERV. No, sir.

JOSEPH. Here's a chair, Sir Peter—I beg—

SIR PET. Well, now we are alone, there is a subject, my dear friend, on which I wish to unburden my mind to you—a point of the greatest moment to my peace; in short, my good friend, Lady Teazle's conduct of late has made me very unhappy.

JOSEPH. Indeed! I am very sorry to hear it.

SIR PET. Yes, 'tis but too plain she has not the least regard for me; but what's worse I have pretty good authority to suppose she has formed an attachment to another.

JOSEPH. Indeed! you astenish me!

SIR PET. Yes! and, between ourselves, I think I've discovered the person.

JOSEPH. How! you alarm me exceedingly.

SIR PET. Aye, my dear friend, I knew you would sympathise with me!

JOSEPH. Yes—believe me, Sir Peter, such a discovery would hurt me just as much as it would you.

SIR PET. I am convinced of it. Ah! it is a happiness to have a friend whom we can trust even with one's family secrets. But have you no guess who I mean?

JOSEPH. I haven't the most distant idea. It can't be Sir Benjamin Backbite!

SIR PET. Oh, no! What say you to Charles?

JOSEPH. My brother!—impossible!

SIR PET. Oh, my dear friend, the goodness of your own heart misleads you. You judge of others by yourself.

JOSEPH. Certainly, Sir Peter, the heart that is conscious of its own integrity is ever slow to credit another's treachery.

SIR PET. True, but your brother has no sentiment—you never hear him talk so.

JOSEPH. Yet I can't but think Lady Teazle herself has too much principle.

SIR PET. Aye, but what is principle against the flattery of a handsome, lively young fellow?

JOSEPH. That's very true.

SIR PET. And there's, you know, the difference of our ages makes it very improbable that she should have any great affection for me; and if she were to be frail and I were to make it public, why, the town would only laugh at me—the foolish old bachelor who had married a girl.

JOSEPH. That's true, to be sure—they would laugh.

SIR PET. Laugh! aye, and make ballads, and paragraphs, and the devil knows what of me.

JOSEPH. No, you must never make it public.

SIR PET. But then again—that the nephew of my old friend, Sir Oliver, should be the person to attempt such a wrong, hurts me more nearly.

JOSEPH. Aye, there's the point. When ingratitude bars the dart of injury, the wound has double danger in it.

SIR PET. Aye—I, that was, in a manner, left his guardian; in whose house he had been so often entertained; who never in my life denied him—my advice.

JOSEPH. Oh, 'tis not to be credited! There may be a man capable of such baseness, to be sure; but for my part, till you can give me positive proofs, I cannot but doubt it. However, if it should be proved on him, he is no longer a brother of mine—I disclaim kindred with him; for the man who can break the laws of hospitality and tempt the wife of his friend, deserves to be branded as the pest of society.

SIR PET. What a difference there is between you! What noble sentiments!

JOSEPH. Yet I cannot suspect Lady Teazle's honor.

SIR PET. I am sure I wish to think well of her and to remove all ground of quarrel between us. She has lately reproached me more than once with having made no settlement on her, and

in our last quarrel she almost hinted that she should not break her heart if I was dead. Now, as we seem to differ in our ideas of expense, I have resolved she shall have her own way and be her own mistress in that respect for the future; and if I were to die, she will find I have not been inattentive to her interest while living. Here, my friend, are the drafts of two deeds, which I wish to have your opinion on. By one she will enjoy eight hundred a year independent while I live, and by the other the bulk of my fortune at my death.

JOSEPH. This conduct, Sir Peter, is indeed truly generous.—[*aside.*] I wish it may not corrupt my pupil.

SIR PET. Yes, I am determined she shall have no cause to complain, though I would not have her acquainted with the latter instance of my affection yet awhile.

JOSEPH. [*aside.*] Nor I, if I could help it.

SIR PET. And now, my dear friend, if you please, we will talk over the situation of your hopes with Maria.

JOSEPH. [*softly.*] Oh, no, Sir Peter; another time, if you please.

SIR PET. I am sensibly chagrined at the little progress you seem to make in her affections.

JOSEPH. [*softly.*] I beg you will not mention it. What are my disappointments when your happiness is in debate!—[*aside.*] 'Sdeath, I shall be ruined every way!

SIR PET. And though you are so averse to my acquainting Lady Teazle with your passion for Maria, I'm sure she's not your enemy in the affair.

JOSEPH. Pray, Sir Peter, now oblige me. I am really too much affected by the subject we have been speaking of, to bestow a thought on my own concerns. The man who is entrusted with his friend's distresses can never—

[*Re-enter SERVANT.*]

—Well, sir?

SERV. Your brother, sir, is speaking to a gentleman in the street, and says he knows you are within.

JOSEPH. 'Sdeath, blockhead, I'm not within.—I'm out for the day.

SIR PET. Stay—hold—a thought has struck me;—you shall be at home.

JOSEPH. Well, well, let him up.—

[Exit SERVANT.]

[aside.] He'll interrupt Sir Peter, however.

SIR PET. Now, my good friend, oblige me, I entreat you. Before Charles comes, let me conceal myself somewhere; then do you tax him on the point we have been talking, and his answer may satisfy me at once.

JOSEPH. Oh, fie, Sir Peter! would you have me join in so mean a trick—to trepan my brother too?

SIR PET. Nay, you tell me you are sure he is innocent; if so, you do him the greatest service by giving him an opportunity to clear himself, and you will set my heart at rest. Come, you shall not refuse me; here, behind the screen will be—Hey! what the devil! There seems to be one listener here already.—I'll swear, I saw a petticoat!

JOSEPH. Ha! ha! ha! Well, this is ridiculous enough. I'll tell you, Sir Peter, though I hold a man of intrigue to be a most despicable character, yet, you know, it does not follow that one is to be an absolute Joseph³⁸ either! Hark'ee, 'tis a little French milliner, a silly rogue that plagues me; and having some character to lose, on your coming, sir, she ran behind the screen.

SIR PET. Ah, you rogue!—But, egad, she has overheard all I have been saying of my wife.

JOSEPH. Oh, 'twill never go any farther, you may depend upon it!

SIR PET. No? then, faith, let her hear it out.—Here's a closet will do as well.

JOSEPH. Well, go in there.

SIR PET. [going into the closet.] Sly rogue! sly rogue!

JOSEPH. A narrow escape, indeed! and a curious situation I'm in, to part man and wife in this manner.

LADY T. [peeping.] Couldn't I steal off?

JOSEPH. Keep close, my angel!

SIR PET. [peeping.] Joseph, tax him home.

JOSEPH. Back, my dear friend!

LADY T. [peeping.] Couldn't you lock Sir Peter in?

JOSEPH. Be still, my life!

SIR PET. [peeping.] You're sure the little milliner won't blab?

JOSEPH. In, in, my dear Sir Peter! —Fore Gad, I wish I had a key to the door.

[Enter CHARLES SURFACE.]

CHARLES. Holla! brother, what has been the matter? Your fellow would not let me up at first. What! have you had a Jew or a wench with you?

JOSEPH. Neither, brother, I assure you.

CHARLES. But what has made Sir Peter steal off? I thought he had been with you.

JOSEPH. He was, brother; but hearing you were coming, he did not choose to stay.

CHARLES. What! was the old gentleman afraid I wanted to borrow money of him?

JOSEPH. No, sir; but I am sorry to find, Charles, you have lately given that worthy man grounds for great uneasiness.

CHARLES. Yes, they tell me I do that to a great many worthy men.—But how so, pray?

JOSEPH. To be plain with you, brother, he thinks you are endeavoring to gain Lady Teazle's affections from him.

CHARLES. Who, I? O lud! not I, upon my word.—Ha! ha! ha! ha! so the old fellow has found out that he has got a young wife, has he?—or, what is worse, Lady Teazle has found out she has an old husband?

JOSEPH. This is no subject to jest on, brother. He who can laugh—

CHARLES. True, true, as you were going to say—then, seriously, I never had the least idea of what you charge me with, upon my honor.

JOSEPH. [loudly.] Well, it will give Sir Peter great satisfaction to hear this.

³⁸ Genesis xxxix, 7-12, tells of Joseph's resistance to Potiphar's wife.

CHARLES. To be sure, I once thought the lady seemed to have taken a fancy to me, but upon my soul I never gave her the least encouragement. Besides, you know my attachment to Maria.

JOSEPH. But sure, brother, even if Lady Teazle had betrayed the fondest partiality for you—

CHARLES. Why, look'ee, Joseph, I hope I shall never deliberately do a dishonorable action, but if a pretty woman was purposely to throw herself in my way—and that pretty woman married to a man old enough to be her father—

JOSEPH. Well—

CHARLES. Why, I believe I should be obliged to borrow a little of your morality, that's all. But brother, do you know now that you surprise me exceedingly, by naming *me* with Lady Teazle; for, i'faith, I always understood you were her favorite.

JOSEPH. Oh, for shame, Charles! This retort is foolish.

CHARLES. Nay, I swear I have seen you exchange such significant glances—

JOSEPH. Nay, nay, sir, this is no jest.

CHARLES. Egad, I'm serious! Don't you remember one day when I called here—

JOSEPH. Nay, prithee, Charles—

CHARLES. And found you together—

JOSEPH. Zounds, sir, I insist—

CHARLES. And another time when your servant—

JOSEPH. Brother, brother, a word with you!—[*aside.*] Gad, I must stop him.

CHARLES. Informed, I say that—

JOSEPH. Hush! I beg your pardon, but Sir Peter has overhead all we have been saying. I knew you would clear yourself, or I should not have consented.

CHARLES. How, Sir Peter! Where is he?

JOSEPH. [*points to the closet.*] Softly!—there!

CHARLES. Oh, 'fore Heaven, I'll have him out.—Sir Peter, come forth!

JOSEPH. No, no—

CHARLES. I say, Sir Peter, come into

court.—[*pulls in SIR PETER.*] What! my old guardian!—What! turn inquisitor and take evidence incog?

SIR PET. Give me your hand, Charles—I believe I have suspected you wrongfully; but you mustn't be angry with Joseph—'twas my plan!

CHARLES. Indeed!

SIR PET. But I acquit you. I promise you I don't think near so ill of you as I did; what I have heard has given me great satisfaction.

CHARLES. Egad, then, 'twas lucky you didn't hear any more, [*apart to JOSEPH*] wasn't it, Joseph?

SIR PET. Ah! you would have retorted on him.

CHARLES. Ah, aye, that was a joke.

SIR PET. Yes, yes, I know his honor too well.

CHARLES. But you might as well have suspected *him* as *me* in this matter, for all that, [*apart to JOSEPH*] mightn't he, Joseph?

SIR PET. Well, well, I believe you.

JOSEPH. [*aside.*] Would they were both out of the room!

SIR PET. And in future, perhaps, we may not be such strangers.

[*Re-enter SERVANT, and whispers JOSEPH SURFACE.*]

SERV. Lady Sneerwell is below, and says she will come up. [*Exit SERVANT.*]

JOSEPH. Gentlemen, I beg pardon—I must wait on you downstairs; here is a person come on particular business.

CHARLES. Well, you can see him in another room. Sir Peter and I have not met a long time, and I have something to say to him.

JOSEPH. [*aside.*] They must not be left together.—I'll send this man away, and return directly.—[*apart to SIR PETER.*] Sir Peter, not a word of the French milliner.

SIR PET. [*apart to JOSEPH.*] I! not for the world! [*Exit JOSEPH SURFACE.*]

—Ah, Charles, if you associated more with your brother, one might indeed hope for your reformation. He is a man of sentiment.—Well, there is nothing in the world so noble as a man of sentiment.

CHARLES. Pshaw! he is too moral by half; and so apprehensive of his "good name," as he calls it, that I suppose he would as soon let a priest into his house as a girl.

SIR PET. No, no—come, come—you wrong him. No, no! Joseph is no rake, but he is no such saint either, in that respect.—[*aside.*] I have a great mind to tell him—we should have a laugh at Joseph.

CHARLES. Oh, hang him! he's a very anchorite—a young hermit!

SIR PET. Hark'ee—you must not abuse him; he may chance to hear of it again, I promise you.

CHARLES. Why, you won't tell him?

SIR PET. No—but—this way.—[*aside.*] Egad, I'll tell him.—Hark'ee—have you a mind to have a good laugh at Joseph?

CHARLES. I should like it of all things.

SIR PET. Then, i'faith, we will! I'll be quit with him for discovering me. He had a girl with him when I called.

CHARLES. What! Joseph? you jest.

SIR PET. Hush!—a little French milliner; and the best of the jest is—she's in the room now.

CHARLES. The devil she is!

SIR PET. Hush! I tell you.

[*Points.*]

CHARLES. Behind the screen! 'Slife, let's unveil her!

SIR PET. No, no, he's coming—you sha'n't, indeed!

CHARLES. Oh, egad, we'll have a peep at the little milliner!

SIR PET. Not for the world!—Joseph will never forgive me.

CHARLES. I'll stand by you—

SIR PET. Odds, here he is!

[JOSEPH SURFACE *enters just as*
CHARLES SURFACE *throws down*
the screen.]

CHARLES. Lady Teazle, by all that's wonderful!

SIR PET. Lady Teazle, by all that's damnable!

CHARLES. Sir Peter, this is one of the smartest French milliners I ever saw. Egad, you seem all to have been

diverting yourselves here at hide and seek, and I don't see who is out of the secret. Shall I beg your ladyship to inform me? Not a word!—Brother, will you be pleased to explain this matter? What! is Morality dumb too?—Sir Peter, though I found you in the dark, perhaps you are not so now! All mute!—Well—though I can make nothing of the affair, I suppose you perfectly understand one another; so I'll leave you to yourselves.—[*going.*] Brother, I'm sorry to find you have given that worthy man grounds for so much uneasiness.—Sir Peter! "there's nothing in the world so noble as a man of sentiment!" [Exit CHARLES.]

[*They stand for some time looking at each other.*]

JOSEPH. Sir Peter—notwithstanding—I confess—that appearances are against me—if you will afford me your patience—I make no doubt—but I shall explain everything to your satisfaction.

SIR PET. If you please, sir.

JOSEPH. The fact is, sir, that Lady Teazle, knowing my pretensions to your ward Maria—I say, sir, Lady Teazle, being apprehensive of the jealousy of your temper—and knowing my friendship to the family—she, sir, I say—called here—in order that—I might explain these pretensions—but on your coming—being apprehensive—as I said—of your jealousy—she withdrew—and this, you may depend on it, is the whole truth of the matter.

SIR PET. A very clear account, upon my word, and I dare swear the lady will vouch for every article of it.

LADY T. For not one word of it, Sir Peter.

SIR PET. How! don't you think it worth while to agree in the lie?

LADY T. There is not one syllable of truth in what that gentleman has told you.

SIR PET. I believe you, upon my soul, ma'am!

JOSEPH. [*aside.*] 'Sdeath, madam, will you betray me?

LADY T. Good Mr. Hypocrite, by your leave, I'll speak for myself.

SIR PET. Aye, let her alone, sir;

you'll find she'll make out a better story than you, without prompting.

LADY T. Hear me, Sir Peter!—I came here on no matter relating to your ward, and even ignorant of this gentleman's pretensions to her. But I came, seduced by his insidious arguments, at least to listen to his pretended passion, if not to sacrifice your honor to his baseness.

SIR PET. Now, I believe, the truth is coming, indeed!

JOSEPH. The woman's mad!

LADY T. No, sir; she has recovered her senses, and your own arts have furnished her with the means.—Sir Peter, I do not expect you to credit me—but the tenderness you expressed for me when I am sure you could not think I was a witness to it, has so penetrated to my heart that had I left the place without the shame of this discovery, my future life should have spoken the sincerity of my gratitude. As for that smooth-tongued hypocrite, who would have seduced the wife of his too credulous friend while he affected honorable addresses to his ward—I behold him now in a light so truly despicable that I shall never again respect myself for having listened to him.

[Exit LADY TEAZLE.]

JOSEPH. Notwithstanding all this, Sir Peter, Heaven knows—

SIR PET. That you are a villain! and so I leave you to your conscience.

JOSEPH. You are too rash, Sir Peter; you shall hear me. The man who shuts out conviction by refusing to—

[Exeunt SIR PETER and JOSEPH SURFACE talking.]

ACT V

SCENE I.

The Library in JOSEPH SURFACE's House

[Enter JOSEPH SURFACE and SERVANT.]

JOSEPH. Mr. Stanley! and why should you think I would see him? You must know he comes to ask something.

SERV. Sir, I should not have let him in, but that Mr. Rowley came to the door with him.

JOSEPH. Pshaw! blockhead! to suppose that I should now be in a temper to receive visits from poor relations!—Well, why don't you show the fellow up?

SERV. I will, sir—Why, sir, it was not my fault that Sir Peter discovered my lady—

JOSEPH. Go, fool! [Exit SERVANT.]—Sure, Fortune never played a man of my policy such a trick before!—my character with Sir Peter, my hopes with Maria, destroyed in a moment! I'm in a rare humor to listen to other people's distresses! I sha'n't be able to bestow even a benevolent sentiment on Stanley.—So! here he comes, and Rowley with him. I must try to recover myself and put a little charity into my face, however. [Exit.]

[Enter SIR OLIVER SURFACE and ROWLEY.]

SIR O. What! does he avoid us? That was he, was it not?

Row. It was, sir. But I doubt you are come a little too abruptly. His nerves are so weak that the sight of a poor relation may be too much for him. I should have gone first to break it to him.

SIR O. Oh, plague of his nerves! Yet this is he whom Sir Peter extols as a man of the most benevolent way of thinking!

Row. As to his way of thinking, I cannot pretend to decide; for to do him justice he appears to have as much speculative benevolence as any private gentleman in the kingdom, though he is seldom so sensual as to indulge himself in the exercise of it.

SIR O. Yet he has a string of charitable sentiments at his fingers' ends.

Row. Or rather, at his tongue's end, Sir Oliver; for I believe there is no sentiment he has such faith in as that "charity begins at home."

SIR O. And his, I presume, is of that domestic sort which never stirs abroad at all.

Row. I doubt you'll find it so;—but he's coming. I mustn't seem to interrupt you; and you know, immediately as you leave him, I come in to announce your arrival in your real character.

SIR O. True; and afterwards you'll meet me at Sir Peter's.

Row. Without losing a moment.

[Exit.]

SIR O. I don't like the complaisance of his features.

[Re-enter JOSEPH SURFACE.]

JOSEPH. Sir, I beg you ten thousand pardons for keeping you a moment waiting.—Mr. Stanley, I presume.

SIR O. At your service.

JOSEPH. Sir, I beg you will do me the honor to sit down—I entreat you, sir.

SIR O. Dear sir—there's no occasion. —[aside.] Too civil by half!

JOSEPH. I have not the pleasure of knowing you, Mr. Stanley, but I am extremely happy to see you look so well. You were nearly related to my mother, I think, Mr. Stanley?

SIR O. I was, sir—so nearly that my present poverty, I fear, may do discredit to her wealthy children, else I should not have presumed to trouble you.

JOSEPH. Dear sir, there needs no apology; he that is in distress, though a stranger, has a right to claim kindred with the wealthy. I am sure, I wish I was one of that class, and had it in my power to offer you even a small relief.

SIR O. If your uncle, Sir Oliver, were here, I should have a friend.

JOSEPH. I wish he was, sir, with all my heart; you should not want an advocate with him, believe me, sir.

SIR O. I should not need one—my distresses would recommend me. But I imagined his bounty would enable you to become the agent of his charity.

JOSEPH. My dear sir, you were strangely misinformed. Sir Oliver is a worthy man—a very worthy man; but avarice, Mr. Stanley, is the vice of age. I will tell you, my good sir, in con-

fidence, what he has done for me has been a mere nothing—though people, I know, have thought otherwise, and for my part I never chose to contradict the report.

SIR O. What! has he never transmitted you bullion—rupees—pagodas?³⁹

JOSEPH. Oh, dear sir, nothing of the kind! No, no; a few presents now and then—china, shawls, congou tea, avadavats,⁴⁰ and Indian crackers—little more, believe me.

SIR O. [aside.] Here's gratitude for twelve thousand pounds!—avadavats and Indian crackers!

JOSEPH. Then, my dear sir, you have heard, I doubt not, of the extravagance of my brother. There are very few would credit what I have done for that unfortunate young man.

SIR O. [aside.] Not I, for one!

JOSEPH. The sums I have lent him! Indeed I have been exceedingly to blame—it was an amiable weakness; however, I don't pretend to defend it—and now I feel it doubly culpable since it has deprived me of the pleasure of serving you, Mr. Stanley, as my heart dictates.

SIR O. [aside.] Dissembler!—Then, sir, you can't assist me?

JOSEPH. At present, it grieves me to say, I cannot; but whenever I have the ability, you may depend upon hearing from me.

SIR O. I am extremely sorry—

JOSEPH. Not more than I, believe me; to pity, without the power to relieve, is still more painful than to ask and be denied.

SIR O. Kind sir, your modest obedient humble servant.

JOSEPH. You leave me deeply affected, Mr. Stanley.—[calls to SERVANT.] William, be ready to open the door.

SIR O. Oh, dear sir, no ceremony.

JOSEPH. Your very obedient.

SIR O. Your most obsequious.

JOSEPH. You may depend upon

³⁹ silver and gold coins of India.

⁴⁰ an Indian song bird.

hearing from me whenever I can be of service.

SIR O. Sweet sir, you are too good!

JOSEPH. In the meantime I wish you health and spirits.

SIR O. Your ever grateful and perpetual humble servant.

JOSEPH. Sir, yours as sincerely.

SIR O. [*aside.*] Charles, you are my heir! [*Exit.*]

JOSEPH. This is one bad effect of a good character; it invites application from the unfortunate, and there needs no small degree of address to gain the reputation of benevolence without incurring the expense. The silver ore of pure charity is an expensive article in the catalogue of a man's good qualities; whereas the sentimental French plate I use instead of it makes just as good a show and pays no tax.

[*Re-enter ROWLEY.*]

Row. Mr. Surface, your servant. I was apprehensive of interrupting you, though my business demands immediate attention, as this note will inform you.

JOSEPH. Always happy to see Mr. Rowley. [*reads the letter.*] Sir Oliver Surface!—My uncle arrived!

Row. He is, indeed; we have just parted—quite well, after a speedy voyage, and impatient to embrace his worthy nephew.

JOSEPH. I am astonished!—William! stop Mr. Stanley if he's not gone.

Row. Oh! he's out of reach, I believe.

JOSEPH. Why did you not let me know this when you came in together?

Row. I thought you had particular business. But I must be gone to inform your brother and appoint him here to meet your uncle. He will be with you in a quarter of an hour.

JOSEPH. So he says. Well, I am strangely overjoyed at his coming.—[*aside.*] Never, to be sure, was anything so damned unlucky!

Row. You will be delighted to see how well he looks.

JOSEPH. Oh! I'm overjoyed to hear it.—[*aside.*] Just at this time!

Row. I'll tell him how impatient you expect him.

JOSEPH. Do, do; pray, give my best duty and affection. Indeed, I cannot express the sensations I feel at the thought of seeing him.

[*Exit ROWLEY.*]

—Certainly his coming just at this time is the cruellest piece of ill-fortune.

[*Exit.*]

SCENE II.

A Room in SIR PETER TEAZLE'S House

[*Enter MRS. CANDOUR and MAID.*]

MAID. Indeed, ma'am, my lady will see nobody at present.

MRS. CAN. Did you tell her it was her friend Mrs. Candour?

MAID. Yes, ma'am, but she begs you will excuse her.

MRS. CAN. Do go again; I shall be glad to see her, if it be only for a moment, for I am sure she must be a great distress. [*Exit MAID.*]

—Dear heart, how provoking! I'm mistress of half the circumstances! We shall have the whole affair in the newspapers, with the names of the parties at length, before I have dropped the story at a dozen houses.

[*Enter SIR BENJAMIN BACKBITE.*]

—Oh, dear Sir Benjamin! you have heard, I suppose—

SIR BEN. Of Lady Teazle and Mr. Surface—

MRS. CAN. And Sir Peter's discovery—

SIR BEN. Oh, the strangest piece of business, to be sure!

MRS. CAN. Well, I never was so surprised in my life. I am so sorry for all parties, indeed.

SIR BEN. Now, I don't pity Sir Peter at all; he was so extravagantly partial to Mr. Surface.

MRS. CAN. Mr. Surface! Why, 'twas with Charles Lady Teazle was detected.

SIR BEN. No, no, I tell you—Mr. Surface is the gallant.

MRS. CAN. No such thing! Charles is the man. 'Twas Mr. Surface brought

Peter on purpose to discover
em.

SIR BEN. I tell you I had it from
e—

MRS. CAN. And I have it from one—

SIR BEN. Who had it from one who
d it—

MRS. CAN. From one immediately
But here comes Lady Sneerwell; perps
she knows the whole affair.

[Enter LADY SNEERWELL.]

LADY S. So, my dear Mrs. Candour,
re's a sad affair of our friend Lady
Teazle!

MRS. CAN. Aye, my dear friend,
no would have thought—

LADY S. Well, there is no trusting
pearances—though, indeed, she was
ways too lively for me.

MRS. CAN. To be sure, her manners
ere a little too free; but then, she
as so young!

LADY S. And had, indeed, some good
qualities.

MRS. CAN. So she had, indeed. But
ve you heard the particulars?

LADY S. No, but everybody says
at Mr. Surface—

SIR BEN. Aye, there! I told you
r. Surface was the man.

MRS. CAN. No, no! indeed, the as-
gnation was with Charles.

LADY S. With Charles! You alarm
e, Mrs. Candour!

MRS. CAN. Yes, yes; he was the
ver. Mr. Surface, to do him justice,
as only the informer.

SIR BEN. Well, I'll not dispute with
u, Mrs. Candour, but be it which it
ay, I hope that Sir Peter's wound will
t—

MRS. CAN. Sir Peter's wound! Oh,
ercy! I didn't hear a word of their
hting.

LADY S. Nor I, a syllable.

SIR BEN. No! what, no mention of
e duel?

MRS. CAN. Not a word.

SIR BEN. Oh, yes! they fought be-
re they left the room.

LADY S. Pray, let us hear!

MRS. CAN. Aye, do oblige us with
e duel!

SIR BEN. "Sir," says Sir Peter, im-
mediately after the discovery, "you
are a most ungrateful fellow."

MRS. CAN. Aye to Charles—

SIR BEN. No, no—to Mr. Surface
—"a most ungrateful fellow; and old
as I am, sir," says he, "I insist on im-
mediate satisfaction."

MRS. CAN. Aye, that must have
been to Charles, for 'tis very unlikely
Mr. Surface should fight in his own
house.

SIR BEN. Gad's life, ma'am, not at
all—"giving me immediate satisfac-
tion."—On this, ma'am, Lady Teazle,
seeing Sir Peter in such danger, ran
out of the room in strong hysterics,
and Charles after her, calling out for
hartshorn and water; then, madam,
they began to fight with swords—

[Enter CRABTREE.]

CRAB. With pistols, nephew—pis-
tols! I have it from undoubted au-
thority.

MRS. CAN. Oh, Mr. Crabtree, then
it is all true!

CRAB. Too true, indeed, madam,
and Sir Peter is dangerously wounded—

SIR BEN. By a thrust in second⁴¹
quite through his left side—

CRAB. By a bullet lodged in the
thorax.

MRS. CAN. Mercy on me! Poor Sir
Peter!

CRAB. Yes, madam—though Charles
would have avoided the matter if he
could.

MRS. CAN. I knew Charles was the
person.

SIR BEN. My uncle, I see, knows
nothing of the matter.

CRAB. But Sir Peter taxed him with
the basest ingratitude—

SIR BEN. That I told you, you
know—

CRAB. Do, nephew, let me speak!—
and insisted on immediate—

SIR BEN. Just as I said—

CRAB. Odds life, nephew, allow
others to know something too! A pair
of pistols lay on the bureau (for Mr.
Surface, it seems, had come home the

⁴¹ a downward parry toward the left.

night before late from Salthill,⁴² where he had been to see the Montem with a friend who has a son at Eton), so, unluckily, the pistols were left charged.

SIR BEN. I heard nothing of this.

CRAB. Sir Peter forced Charles to take one, and they fired, it seems, pretty nearly together. Charles's shot took effect, as I tell you, and Sir Peter's missed; but what is very extraordinary, the ball struck against a little bronze Shakespeare that stood over the fireplace, grazed out of the window at a right angle, and wounded the postman, who was just coming to the door with a double letter from Northamptonshire.

SIR BEN. My uncle's account is more circumstantial, I confess; but I believe mine is the true one, for all that.

LADY S. [*aside.*] I am more interested in this affair than they imagine, and must have better information.

[*Exit LADY SNEERWELL.*]

SIR BEN. Ah! Lady Sneerwell's alarm is very easily accounted for.

CRAB. Yes, yes, they certainly do say—but that's neither here nor there.

MRS. CAN. But pray, where is Sir Peter at present?

CRAB. Oh! they brought him home, and he is now in the house, though the servants are ordered to deny him.

MRS. CAN. I believe so; and Lady Teazle, I suppose, attending him.

CRAB. Yes, yes; and I saw one of the faculty enter just before me.

SIR BEN. Hey! who comes here?

CRAB. Oh, this is he—the physician, depend on't.

MRS. CAN. Oh, certainly! it must be the physician; and now we shall know.

[*Enter SIR OLIVER SURFACE.*]

CRAB. Well, doctor, what hopes?

MRS. CAN. Aye, doctor, how's your patient?

SIR BEN. Now, doctor, isn't it a wound with a small-sword?

CRAB. A bullet lodged in the thorax, for a hundred!

⁴²A place near Eton. There the students went to beg for contributions to pay the expenses of the senior scholars. The ceremony was called *processus ad montem*.

SIR O. Doctor!—a wound with a small-sword! and a bullet in the thorax!—Oons! are you mad, good people?

SIR BEN. Perhaps, sir, you are not a doctor?

SIR O. Truly, I am to thank you for my degree if I am.

CRAB. Only a friend of Sir Peter's then, I presume. But sir, you must have heard of his accident?

SIR O. Not a word!

CRAB. Not of his being dangerously wounded?

SIR O. The devil he is!

SIR BEN. Run through the body—

CRAB. Shot in the breast—

SIR BEN. By one Mr. Surface—

CRAB. Aye, the younger.

SIR O. Hey! what the plague! you seem to differ strangely in your accounts; however, you agree that Sir Peter is dangerously wounded.

SIR BEN. Oh, yes, we agree in that.

CRAB. Yes, yes, I believe there can be no doubt of that.

SIR O. Then, upon my word, for a person in that situation, he is the most imprudent man alive; for here he comes, walking as if nothing at all was the matter.

[*Enter SIR PETER TEAZLE.*]

—Odds heart, Sir Peter! you are come in good time, I promise you, for we had just given you over!

SIR BEN. [*aside to CRABTREE.*] Egad, uncle, this is the most sudden recovery!

SIR O. Why, man! what do you out of bed with a small-sword through your body and a bullet lodged in your thorax?

SIR PET. A small-sword and a bullet!

SIR O. Aye; these gentlemen would have killed you without law or physic, and wanted to dub me a doctor to make me an accomplice.

SIR PET. Why, what is all this?

SIR BEN. We rejoice, Sir Peter, that the story of the duel is not true, and are sincerely sorry for your other misfortune.

SIR PET. [*aside.*] So, so—all over the town already!

CRAV. Though, Sir Peter, you were certainly vastly to blame to marry at your years.

SIR PET. Sir, what business is that of yours?

MRS. CAN.—Though, indeed, as Sir Peter made so good a husband, he's very much to be pitied.

SIR PET. Plague on your pity, ma'am! I desire none of it.

SIR BEN. However, Sir Peter, you must not mind the laughing and jests you will meet with on the occasion.

SIR PET. Sir, sir! I desire to be master in my own house.

CRAV. 'Tis no uncommon case, that's one comfort.

SIR PET. I insist on being left to myself—without ceremony, I insist on your leaving my house directly!

MRS. CAN. Well, well, we are going; and depend on't, we'll make the best report of it we can. [*Exit.*]

SIR PET. Leave my house!

CRAV.—And tell how hardly you've been treated. [*Exit.*]

SIR PET. Leave my house!

SIR BEN.—And how patiently you bear it. [*Exit.*]

SIR PET. Fiends! vipers! furies! Oh! that their own venom would choke them!

SIR O. They are very provoking indeed, Sir Peter.

[*Enter ROWLEY.*]

Row. I heard high words; what has ruffled you, sir?

SIR PET. Pshaw! what signifies asking? Do I ever pass a day without my vexations?

Row. Well, I'm not inquisitive.

SIR O. Well, Sir Peter, I have seen both my nephews in the manner we proposed.

SIR PET. A precious couple they are!

Row. Yes, and Sir Oliver is convinced that your judgment was right, Sir Peter.

SIR O. Yes, I find Joseph is indeed the man, after all.

Row. Aye, as Sir Peter says, he is a man of sentiment.

SIR O. And acts up to the sentiments he professes.⁴³

Row. It certainly is edification to hear him talk.

SIR O. Oh, he's a model for the young men of the age!—But how's this, Sir Peter? you don't join us in your friend Joseph's praise as I expected.

SIR PET. Sir Oliver, we live in a damned wicked world, and the fewer we praise the better.

Row. What! do you say so, Sir Peter, who were never mistaken in your life?

SIR PET. Pshaw! plague on you both! I see by your sneering you have heard the whole affair. I shall go mad among you!

Row. Then, to fret you no longer, Sir Peter, we are indeed acquainted with it all. I met Lady Teazle coming from Mr. Surface's so humbled that she deigned to request me to be her advocate with you.

SIR PET. And does Sir Oliver know all this?

SIR O. Every circumstance.

SIR PET. What—of the closet and the screen, hey?

SIR O. Yes, yes, and the little French milliner. Oh, I have been vastly diverted with the story! ha! ha! ha!

SIR PET. 'Twas very pleasant.

SIR O. I never laughed more in my life, I assure you—ha! ha! ha!

SIR PET. Oh, vastly diverting!—ha! ha! ha!

Row. To be sure, Joseph with his sentiments! ha! ha! ha!

SIR PET. Yes, yes, his sentiments! ha! ha! ha—Hypocritical villain!

SIR O. Aye, and that rogue Charles to pull Sir Peter out of the closet: ha! ha! ha!

SIR PET. Ha! ha! 'twas devilish entertaining, to be sure!

SIR O. Ha! ha! ha! Egad, Sir Peter, I should like to have seen your face when the screen was thrown down—ha! ha!

SIR PET. Yes, yes, my face when the

⁴³ from Sir Peter's lines, I, ii.

screen was thrown down—ha! ha! ha! Oh, I must never show my head again!

SIR O. But come, come, it isn't fair to laugh at you neither, my old friend—though, upon my soul, I can't help it.

SIR PET. Oh, pray, don't restrain your mirth on my account; it does not hurt me at all. I laugh at the whole affair myself. Yes, yes, I think being a standing jest for all one's acquaintance a very happy situation. Oh, yes, and then of a morning to read the paragraphs about Mr. S——, Lady T——, and Sir P——, will be so entertaining!

Row. Without affectation, Sir Peter, you may despise the ridicule of fools. But I see Lady Teazle going towards the next room; I am sure you must desire a reconciliation as earnestly as she does.

SIR O. Perhaps my being here prevents her coming to you. Well, I'll leave honest Rowley to mediate between you; but he must bring you all presently to Mr. Surface's, where I am now returning, if not to reclaim a libertine at least to expose hypocrisy.

SIR PET. Ah, I'll be present at your discovering yourself there with all my heart, though 'tis a vile unlucky place for discoveries.

Row. We'll follow.

[Exit SIR OLIVER SURFACE.]

SIR PET. She is not coming here, you see, Rowley.

Row. No, but she has left the door of that room open, you perceive. See, she is in tears.

SIR PET. Certainly a little mortification appears very becoming in a wife. Don't you think it will do her good to let her pine a little?

Row. Oh, this is ungenerous in you!

SIR PET. Well, I know not what to think. You remember the letter I found of hers evidently intended for Charles?

Row. A mere forgery, Sir Peter!—laid in your way on purpose. This is one of the points which I intend Snake shall give you conviction of.

SIR PET. I wish I were once satisfied of that. She looks this way. What

a remarkably elegant turn of the head she has! Rowley, I'll go to her.

Row. Certainly.

SIR PET. Though when it is known that we are reconciled, people will laugh at me ten times more.

Row. Let them laugh, and retort their malice only by showing them you are happy in spite of it.

SIR PET. I'faith, so I will; and, if I'm not mistaken, we may yet be the happiest couple in the country.

Row. Nay, Sir Peter, he who once lays aside suspicion—

SIR PET. Hold, Master Rowley! if you have any regard for me, never let me hear you utter anything like a sentiment; I have had enough of them to serve me the rest of my life.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.

The Library in JOSEPH SURFACE's House

[Enter JOSEPH SURFACE and LADY SNEERWELL.]

LADY S. Impossible! Will not Sir Peter immediately be reconciled to Charles, and of course no longer oppose his union with Maria? The thought is distraction to me.

JOSEPH. Can passion furnish a remedy?

LADY S. No, nor cunning neither. Oh, I was a fool, an idiot, to league with such a blunderer!

JOSEPH. Sure, Lady Sneerwell, I am the greatest sufferer; yet you see I bear the accident with calmness.

LADY S. Because the disappointment doesn't reach your heart; your interest only attached you to Maria. Had you felt for her what I have for that ungrateful libertine, neither your temper nor hypocrisy could prevent your showing the sharpness of your vexation.

JOSEPH. But why should your reproaches fall on me for this disappointment?

LADY S. Are you not the cause of it? Had you not a sufficient field for your roguery in imposing upon Sir

Peter and supplanting your brother, but you must endeavor to seduce his wife? I hate such an avarice of crimes; 'tis an unfair monopoly, and never prospers.

JOSEPH. Well, I admit I have been to blame. I confess I deviated from the direct road of wrong, but I don't think we're so totally defeated neither.

LADY S. No!

JOSEPH. You tell me you have made a trial of Snake since we met, and that you still believe him faithful to us?

LADY S. I do believe so.

JOSEPH. And that he has undertaken, should it be necessary, to swear and prove that Charles is at this time contracted by vows and honor to your ladyship, which some of his former letters to you will serve to support.

LADY S. This, indeed, might have assisted.

JOSEPH. Come, come; it is not too late yet.—[*knocking at the door.*] But hark! this is probably my uncle, Sir Oliver. Retire to that room; we'll consult farther when he is gone.

LADY S. Well, but if *he* should find you out too?

JOSEPH. Oh, I have no fear of that. Sir Peter will hold his tongue for his own credit's sake—and you may depend on it, I shall soon discover Sir Oliver's weak side!

LADY S. I have no diffidence of your abilities, only be constant to one roguery at a time.

JOSEPH. I will, I will!

[*Exit LADY SNEERWELL.*]

—So! 'tis confounded hard, after such bad fortune, to be baited by one's confederate in evil. Well, at all events my character is so much better than Charles's that I certainly—hey!—what—this is not Sir Oliver, but old Stanley again. Plague on't that he should return to tease me just now! I shall have Sir Oliver come and find him here—and—

[*Enter SIR OLIVER SURFACE.*]

—Gad's life, Mr. Stanley, why have you come back to plague me at this

time? You must not stay now, upon my word.

SIR O. Sir, I hear your uncle Oliver is expected here, and though he has been so penurious to you, I'll try what he'll do for me.

JOSEPH. Sir, 'tis impossible for you to stay now; so I must beg—Come any other time, and I promise you, you shall be assisted.

SIR O. No; Sir Oliver and I must be acquainted.

JOSEPH. Zounds, sir! then I insist on your quitting the room directly.

SIR O. Nay, sir—

JOSEPH. Sir, I insist on't!—Here, William! show this gentleman out. Since you compel me, sir, not one moment—this is such insolence.

[*Going to push him out.*]

[*Enter CHARLES SURFACE.*]

CHARLES. Heyday! what's the matter now? What the devil, have you got hold of my little broker here? Zounds, brother, don't hurt little Premium. What's the matter, my little fellow?

JOSEPH. So! he has been with you, too, has he?

CHARLES. To be sure, he has. Why, he's as honest a little—But sure, Joseph, you have not been borrowing money too, have you?

JOSEPH. Borrowing! no! But brother, you know we expect Sir Oliver here every—

CHARLES. O Gad, that's true! Noll mustn't find the little broker here, to be sure.

JOSEPH. Yet, Mr. Stanley insists—

CHARLES. Stanley! why, his name's Premium.

JOSEPH. No, sir, Stanley.

CHARLES. No, no, Premium.

JOSEPH. Well, no matter which—but—

CHARLES. Aye, aye, Stanley or Premium, 'tis the same thing, as you say; for I suppose he goes by half a hundred names, besides "A. B."* at the coffee-house.

[*Knocking.*]

* in common use for clandestine meetings.

JOSEPH. 'Sdeath! here's Sir Oliver at the door. Now, I beg, Mr. Stanley—

CHARLES. Aye, aye, and I beg, Mr. Premium—

SIR O. Gentlemen—

JOSEPH. Sir, by Heaven, you shall go!

CHARLES. Aye, out with him, certainly!

SIR O. This violence—

JOSEPH. Sir, 'tis your own fault.

CHARLES. Out with him, to be sure!
[Both forcing SIR OLIVER out.]

[Enter SIR PETER and LADY TEAZLE, MARIA, and ROWLEY.]

SIR PET. My old friend, Sir Oliver—Hey! what in the name of wonder—here are dutiful nephews—assault their uncle at a first visit!

LADY T. Indeed, Sir Oliver, 'twas well we came in to rescue you.

ROW. Truly it was; for I perceive, Sir Oliver, the character of old Stanley was no protection to you.

SIR O. Nor of Premium either; the necessities of the former could not extort a shilling from that benevolent gentleman, and now, egad, with the other I stood a chance of faring worse than my ancestors, and being knocked down without being bid for.

JOSEPH. Charles!

CHARLES. Joseph!

JOSEPH. 'Tis now complete!

CHARLES. Very!

SIR O. Sir Peter, my friend, and Rowley too—look on that elder nephew of mine. You know what he has already received from my bounty, and you also know how gladly I would have regarded half my fortune as held in trust for him; judge, then, my disappointment in discovering him to be destitute of faith, charity, and gratitude!

SIR PET. Sir Oliver, I should be more surprised at this declaration if I had not myself found him to be mean, treacherous, and hypocritical.

LADY T. And if the gentleman pleads not guilty to these, pray let him call me to his character.

SIR PET. Then I believe we need add

no more. If he knows himself, he will consider it as the most perfect punishment, that he is known to the world.

CHARLES. [aside.] If they talk this way to Honesty, what will they say to me by and by?

SIR O. As for that prodigal, his brother, there—

CHARLES. [aside.] Aye, now comes my turn; the damned family pictures will ruin me!

JOSEPH. Sir Oliver—uncle, will you honor me with a hearing?

CHARLES. [aside.] Now, if Joseph would make one of his long speeches, I might recollect myself a little.

SIR O. [to JOSEPH.] I suppose you would undertake to justify yourself entirely?

JOSEPH. I trust I could.

SIR O. [to CHARLES.] Well, sir!—and you could justify yourself too, I suppose?

CHARLES. Not that I know of, Sir Oliver.

SIR O. What!—Little Premium has been let too much into the secret, I suppose?

CHARLES. True, sir; but they were family secrets, and should not be mentioned again, you know.

ROW. Come, Sir Oliver, I know you cannot speak of Charles's follies with anger.

SIR O. Odds heart, no more I can, nor with gravity either. Sir Peter, do you know the rogue bargained with me for all his ancestors—sold me judges and generals by the foot, and maiden aunts as cheap as broken china.

CHARLES. To be sure, Sir Oliver, I did make a little free with the family canvas, that's the truth on't. My ancestors may rise in judgment against me, there's no denying it; but believe me sincere when I tell you—and upon my soul I would not say so if I was not—that if I do not appear mortified at the exposure of my follies, it is because I feel at this moment the warmest satisfaction in seeing you, my liberal benefactor.

SIR O. Charles, I believe you. Give me your hand again. The ill-looking

little fellow over the settee has made your peace.

CHARLES. Then, sir, my gratitude to the original is still increased.

LADY T. Yet, I believe, Sir Oliver, here is one whom Charles is still more anxious to be reconciled to.

SIR O. Oh, I have heard of his attachment there; and, with the young lady's pardon, if I construe right—that blush—

SIR PET. Well, child, speak your sentiments!

MARIA. Sir, I have little to say, but that I shall rejoice to hear that he is happy; for me, whatever claim I had to his attention, I willingly resign to one who has a better title.

CHARLES. How, Maria!

SIR PET. Heyday! what's the mystery now? While he appeared an incorrigible rake, you would give your hand to no one else; and now that he is likely to reform, I'll warrant you won't have him!

MARIA. His own heart and Lady Sneerwell know the cause.

CHARLES. Lady Sneerwell!

JOSEPH. Brother, it is with great concern I am obliged to speak on this point, but my regard to justice compels me and Lady Sneerwell's injuries can no longer be concealed.

[*Opens the door.*]

[*Enter LADY SNEERWELL.*]

SIR PET. So! another French milliner! Egad, he has one in every room in the house, I suppose!

LADY S. Ungrateful Charles! Well may you be surprised, and feel for the indelicate situation your perfidy has forced me into.

CHARLES. Pray, uncle, is this another plot of yours? For, as I have life, I don't understand it.

JOSEPH. I believe, sir, there is but the evidence of one person more necessary to make it extremely clear.

SIR PET. And that person, I imagine, is Mr. Snake.—Rowley, you were perfectly right to bring him with us, and pray let him appear.

Row. Walk in, Mr. Snake.

[*Enter SNAKE.*]

I thought his testimony might be wanted; however, it happens unluckily that he comes to confront Lady Sneerwell, not to support her.

LADY S. A villain! Treacherous to me at last! Speak, fellow; have you too conspired against me?

SNAKE. I beg your ladyship ten thousand pardons; you paid me extremely liberally for the lie in question, but I unfortunately have been offered double to speak the truth.

SIR PET. Plot and counter-plot, egad!

LADY S. [*going.*] The torments of shame and disappointment on you all!

LADY T. Hold, Lady Sneerwell—before you go, let me thank you for the trouble you and that gentleman have taken, in writing letters from me to Charles and answering them yourself; and let me also request you to make my respects to the scandalous college of which you are president, and inform them that Lady Teazle, licentiate, begs leave to return the diploma they granted her, as she leaves off practice and kills characters no longer.

LADY S. You, too, madam!—provoking—insolent! May your husband live these fifty years! [*Exit.*]

SIR PET. Oons! what a fury!

LADY T. A malicious creature, indeed!

SIR PET. What!—not for her last wish!

LADY T. Oh, no!

SIR O. Well, sir, and what have you to say now?

JOSEPH. Sir, I am so confounded to find that Lady Sneerwell could be guilty of suborning Mr. Snake in this manner to impose on us all, that I know not what to say; however, lest her revengeful spirit should prompt her to injure my brother, I had certainly better follow her directly. [*Exit.*]

SIR PET. Moral to the last drop!

SIR O. Aye, and marry her, Joseph, if you can. Oil and vinegar, egad! you'll do very well together.

Row. I believe we have no more occasion for Mr. Snake at present?

SNAKE. Before I go, I beg pardon once for all for whatever uneasiness I have been the humble instrument of causing to the parties present.

SIR PET. Well, well, you have made atonement by a good deed at last.

SNAKE. But I must request of the company that it shall never be known.

SIR PET. Hey! what the plague! are you ashamed of having done a right thing once in your life?

SNAKE. Ah, sir, consider—I live by the badness of my character; I have nothing but my infamy to depend on, and if it were once known that I had been betrayed into an honest action, I should lose every friend I have in the world.

SIR O. Well, well, we'll not traduce you by saying anything in your praise; never fear. *[Exit SNAKE.]*

SIR PET. There's a precious rogue!

LADY T. See, Sir Oliver, there needs no persuasion now to reconcile your nephew and Maria.

SIR O. Aye, aye, that's as it should be, and, egad, we'll have the wedding to-morrow morning.

CHARLES. Thank you, dear uncle.

SIR PET. What, you rogue! don't you ask the girl's consent first?

CHARLES. Oh, I have done that a long time—a minute ago—and she has looked yes.

MARIA. For shame, Charles!—I protest, Sir Peter, there has not been a word.

SIR O. Well, then, the fewer the better; may your love for each other never know abatement!

SIR PET. And may you live as happily together as Lady Teazle and I intend to do!

CHARLES. Rowley, my old friend, I am sure you congratulate me; and I suspect that I owe you much.

SIR O. You do, indeed, Charles.

Row. If my efforts to serve you had not succeeded, you would have been in my debt for the attempt; but deserve to be happy, and you overpay me.

SIR PET. Aye, honest Rowley always said you would reform.

CHARLES. Why, as to reforming, Sir Peter, I'll make no promises, and that I take to be a proof that I intend to set about it. But here shall be my monitor—my gentle guide.—Ah! can I leave the virtuous path those eyes illumine?

Though thou, dear maid, shouldst waive⁴⁵ thy beauty's sway,
Thou still must rule, because I will obey:

An humble fugitive from Folly, view;
No sanctuary near but Love and you. *[To the audience.]*

You can, indeed, each anxious fear remove,
For even Scandal dies if you approve. *[Exeunt omnes.]*

EPILOGUE

BY MR. COLMAN⁴⁶

SPOKEN BY LADY TEAZLE

I, who was late so volatile and gay,
Like a trade-wind must now blow all one way,
Bend all my cares, my studies, and my vows,
To one dull rusty weathercock—my spouse!
So wills our virtuous bard—the motley Bayes
Of crying epilogues and laughing plays!
Old bachelors who marry smart young wives,
Learn from our play to regulate their lives;
Each bring his dear to town, all faults upon her—
London will prove the very source of honor.
Plunged fairly in, like a cold bath it serves,
When principles relax, to brace the nerves.

⁴⁵Q. wave.

⁴⁶George Colman, the elder, manager of the Haymarket Theater.

Such is my case; and yet I must deplore
 That the gay dream of dissipation's o'er.
 And say, ye fair! was ever lively wife,
 Born with a genius for the highest life,
 Like me, untimely blasted in her bloom,
 Like me condemned to such a dismal doom?
 Save money—when I just knew how to waste it!
 Leave London—just as I began to taste it!
 Must I then watch the early crowing cock,
 The melancholy ticking of a clock,
 In a lone rustic hall forever pounded,⁴⁷
 With dogs, cats, rats, and squalling brats surrounded?
 With humble curate can I now retire
 (While good Sir Peter boozes with the squire),
 And at backgammon mortify my soul
 That pants for loo, or flutters at a vole⁴⁸?
 "Seven's the main!" Dear sound that must expire,
 Lost at hot cockles⁴⁹ round a Christmas fire!
 The transient hour of fashion too soon spent,
 Farewell the tranquil mind, farewell content!

⁴⁷ imprisoned.

⁴⁸ taking the game in one deal.

⁴⁹ in which the person struck is "it" until he guesses the offender.

Farewell the plumèd head, the cushioned tête,
 That takes the cushion from its proper seat!
 That spirit-stirring drum!—card drums I mean,
 Spadille⁵⁰—odd trick—pam⁵¹—basto⁵²—king and queen!
 And you, ye knockers, that, with brazen throat,
 The welcome visitors' approach denote;
 Farewell all quality of high renown,
 Pride, pomp, and circumstance of glorious town!
 Farewell! your revels I partake no more,
 And Lady Teazle's occupation's o'er!⁵³
 All this I told our bard; he smiled, and said 'twas clear,
 I ought to play deep tragedy next year.
 Meanwhile he drew wise morals from his play,
 And in these solemn periods stalked away:
 "Bless'd were the fair like you; her faults who stopped
 And closed her follies when the curtain dropped!
 No more in vice or error to engage,
 Or play the fool at large on life's great stage."

[*The End*]

⁵⁰ the ace of spades.

⁵¹ the knave of clubs.

⁵² the ace of clubs.

⁵³ lines imitating *Othello*, III, iii, 347-357.

CHAPTER VIII

THE DRAMA OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

At the end of the eighteenth century there was no sharp break in the drama such as had been occasioned by the closing of the theaters in 1642. There was no significant document such as Collier's *Short View*, which had appeared in 1698. There was no epoch-making première such as was to mark a turning point in French drama in 1830. Only for convenience, then, is the dividing date for drama given as 1800. This arbitrary choice enables one to use the terms eighteenth century and nineteenth century with accuracy. Because of Wordsworth's famous preface, moreover, the year 1800 has as valid claims as 1784, 1789, or 1798 to be the dividing line between two ages. The first three decades of the new century witnessed the great Romantic flowering of English literature. Scott appeared to dominate the novel of Europe. There were at least six major poets—Wordsworth, Coleridge, Scott, Byron, Shelley, and Keats. The art of criticism was virtually remade by Coleridge, Lamb, and Hazlitt.

It will be at once noted that the name of no great dramatist is found in the annals of the period. There is no Shakespeare—there are no Sheridans or Pineros, either. Before discussing such authors as did compose plays in the first few decades of the century, it will consequently be well to consider the alienation of the Romantic genius from the composition of drama. There are a number of reasons.

In the first place, drama and Romanticism are, by most definitions, antagonistic terms. Some of the important characteristics of Romanticism are subjectivity, medievalism, love of the remote, delight in nature, preoccupation with humble life, and liberalism. Perhaps the cardinal one is subjectivity. But the drama is of all types of literature perhaps the least subjective. Medievalism, another Romantic element, was thoroughly naturalized in a novel such as *Ivanhoe* or a poem such as *The Eve of St. Agnes*; the love of the remote inspired such novels as *The Talisman* and such poems as the laureate Southey's *Curse of Kehama*. But the drama, above all other types of literature, holds or should hold the mirror up to contemporary life, and English drama by this time was specifically tending toward realism. The very phrase "return to nature" is evidence that such an aspect of Romanticism could have nothing to do with the theater; no one thought of such a naturalism as that later to be introduced by T. W. Robertson; and the "nature" in such plays as the long-popular *Douglas* is not truly dramatic. Interest in humble life showed itself in various plays—chiefly in the stock characters of the virtuous country youth and maiden—but there was no union between plays of this type and literature. Liberalism, of course, was not well adapted to exploitation in a story in dialogue.

It was not that men of letters avoided the drama. Quite the contrary was true. Scott essayed translation, editing, biography, and history, as well as poetry and the novel—that he also tried drama, witness a translation of Goethe's *Goetz von Berlichingen* (1799) and also the posthumous *The House of Aspen*. Scott appeared on the stage only indirectly, in plays based on the Waverley novels; these stressed the more melodramatic episodes and were in no sense dramatic literature. The youthful Wordsworth penned *The Borderers*, a blank verse

play which missed greatness. Coleridge wrote *Osorio* in the prevailing mood. Lamb wrote two plays, *John Woodvil* (1801 or 1802) and *Mr. H—*. The latter achieved presentation at Drury Lane in December, 1806, but was not a success. Somewhat in the manner of Shakespeare was Shelley's *The Cenci, a Tragedy* (1819). His *Prometheus Unbound, a Lyrical Drama* (1820), is regarded as one of the glories of Romantic poetry. But *Prometheus Unbound* could not be produced on the stage, and *The Cenci* did not lend itself to nineteenth century production. To sum up, then, the poets and other writers of the Romantic period wrote plays under two handicaps. In the first place, they were in general devoid of the dramatic temperament. In the second place, they had no intimate knowledge of the theater. Wordsworth, for instance, hated London, knew it but slightly, and yet wrote a play which he submitted to the manager of Drury Lane.

Still other reasons are to be adduced as contributing to the gap between literature and drama in the early years of the century. Under the protection of the monopolies, the patent theaters on successive rebuildings had been made larger and larger, and a conversational drama was now impossible. It has been estimated that one-fourth of the audience could not hear at all and that many of the others could hear but poorly in the patent theaters of the early nineteenth century. By 1806 the patents came to be more flagrantly violated than ever. Such theaters as the Sans Pareil (later known as the Adelphi) became a thorn in the sides of the managers of the patent houses. By an interpretation of the law, anything with a bit of music could be produced in the illegitimate houses, the scope of the patents being restricted to orthodox comedy and tragedy. When Sheridan, however, began to do such things as introduce elephants on the stage, the proprietors of the lesser theaters began justly to feel that the traditional houses had forfeited their right to a monopoly of drama. An issue was joined. One side held that the abolition of the monopoly would revive great days in the theater; the other held that the rigid enforcement of the monopoly prerogative would achieve the same desideratum. The issue was finally settled by the abolition of the monopoly in 1843; but before this date a score or more of theaters had, with varying vicissitudes of fortune, risen to compete with the protected houses.

The situation just outlined afforded a background in which a great drama was impossible. A new play had no chance of real success in the enormous patent theaters—those were dedicated to revivals and to spectacle, and the other theaters offered little encouragement. Not only would a dramatic author be seriously hampered by the necessary musical accompaniment, but he could receive small remuneration from a manager whose productions were likely at any time to be enjoined—even temporarily.

In the early nineteenth century because of the grouping of stars in the patent companies, authors tended, also, to write less from life than for a certain group of players; the desire to give each performer a satisfactory part kept unity and naturalness from the dramas. In *The Old Drama and the New*, William Archer states that dramatic authors received as little as three pounds and a maximum of twenty or thirty pounds as an outright purchase price of a play. There is, again, no wonder that the profession of dramatic authorship was at a low ebb in the first part of the nineteenth century.

In consequence, the first part of the nineteenth century was a period of actors rather than of playwrights. It was the period of several great comedians, including the subject of Charles Lamb's "On the Acting of Munden":

There is one face of Farley, one face of Knight, one (but what a one it is!) of Liston; but Munden has none that you can properly pin down, and call his. When you think he has exhausted his battery of looks, in unaccountable warfare with your gravity, suddenly

he sprouts out an entirely new set of features, like Hydra. He is not one, but legion. Not so much a comedian, as a company. If his name could be multiplied like his countenance, it might fill a play-bill. He, and he alone, literally *makes faces*: applied to any other person, the phrase is a mere figure, denoting certain modifications of the human countenance. . . .

It was the period of several great tragedians; Mrs. Siddons, in the first decade; John Kemble; Edmund Kean; and, somewhat later, Fanny Kemble, the daughter of the comedian Charles, an actor of no mean ability and a brother of John.

The turn from theatrical conditions to specific authors and plays necessitates another reference to Kotzebue. As the eighteenth century ended, so the nineteenth century began with the great vogue of the German Romantic drama. The furore—unstilled even by the brilliant *Anti-Jacobin* parody, *The Rovers*—excited emulation. Pizarro, Sheridan's adaptation of Kotzebue's *Die Spanier in Peru*, and *The Stranger*, Benjamin Thompson's version of the same author's *Menschenhass und Reue* continued most popular. English imitators arose—the most notable being Matthew Gregory Lewis (1775-1818), who was known as "Monk" from his notorious romance *Ambrosio, or The Monk*. Lewis's plays included *Castle Spectre* (Drury Lane, 1797) and *Rugantino* (Covent Garden, 1805), a dramatization of the romance, *The Bravo of Venice*, which he had translated from the German. The translations and adaptations of foreign drama followed, it must be noted, the less worthy strains in that drama. The Kotzebue plays which are remembered in Germany today are not the ones which thrilled London in 1800. Scott's translation of Goethe's *Götz von Berlichingen* did not achieve production.

When the Kotzebue furore had spent itself, O'Keefe, the younger Colman, Thomas Holcroft, and Thomas Morton continued as perhaps the best-known dramatists. Their plays in the main were comedies of middle-class life. O'Keefe, Colman, and Holcroft were referred to in the preceding chapter. Morton's *Speed the Plow* (1800) gave to the language the name of Mrs. Grundy—a lady who, like the mother in Sardou's *La Famille Benoîtton*—does not come on the stage. *The School for Reform* (1805), another play by Morton, indicates even in its title the imitative character of the comedy of the time.

Space must now be given to the work of two semi-successful literary dramatists of the period. Joanna Baillie (1762-1851) was hailed as a "female Shakespeare," but her *Plays in Which it is Attempted to Delineate the Stronger Passions of the Mind* (three volumes—1798, 1809, 1812) lacked real dramatic value. Such great performers as Kemble and Mrs. Siddons played, however, in her *de Montfort* (Drury Lane, 1800). The poet Byron (1788-1824) wrote plays under various influences, classical and Romantic, much of his work being inspired by the Italian dramatist, Alfieri. Byron's descriptive poem, *Childe Harold* recalls as part of the glories of Venice the city's association with Shakespeare and Otway—with the Moor, the Merchant, and Pierre; and *Marino Faliero* (1820, 1821) and *The Two Foscari* (1821) may be regarded as bids for comparison with the poet's predecessors in drama. *Manfred* (1817), *Sardanapalus* (1821), and *Cain* (1821) are among the author's other plays; *Werner* (1822), however, was the only Byron play to achieve anything like success upon the stage. But Byron had little flair in general for a theatrically effective dramatic situation. When all is said, his plays belong to the field of narrative poetry rather than to the field of the acted drama.

Achieving the not difficult task of towering above his contemporaries in the twenties was James Sheridan Knowles (1784-1862). Knowles began his career as a dramatist as early as 1810. His popular successes include *Virginia* (1820), *William Tell* (1825), *Alfred the Great* (1831), and *The Hunchback*

(1832). Knowles's lengthy list of plays includes many types. His models are usually Elizabethan. He tried hard to revive the literary drama, but he failed—partly perhaps because he lacked genius, partly because the old theatrical order was dead and in its ashes a new life was not yet stirring.

Other playwrights of the period were Richard Lalor Sheil (1791-1851), Charles Robert Maturin (1782-1824), Henry Hart Milman (1791-1867), Bryan Waller Procter (1787-1874), and Sir Henry Taylor (1800-1886). Sheil's plays include *Adelaide: or The Emigrants* (Crow Street Theater, Dublin, 1814); *The Apostate* (Covent Garden, 1817), *Bellamira, or the Fall of Tunis* (Covent Garden, 1818), *Evadne, or the Statue* (1819), and *The Huguenot* (1822). Among Maturin's plays are *Bertram: or the Castle of St. Aldobrand*, *Manuel*, *Fredolfo*—all about 1816-1817. Milman's plays include *The Fall of Jerusalem*, *The Martyr of Antioch*, *Belshazzar*, and *Anne Boleyn*, all written about 1820-1826. Bryan Waller Procter, the lyric poet who wrote under the pseudonym, "Barry Cornwall," and in his long life enjoyed the friendship of Lamb, Browning, and Swinburne, wrote a tragedy, *Mirandola*, which achieved success at Covent Garden in 1821. Sir Henry Taylor's *Philip van Artevelde* (1834), a poetic drama, achieved considerable success when supported by Lockhart's praise in the *Quarterly Review*.

In the light of posterity the Romantic period is more important in criticism than in drama. Five great reviews and magazines were established—*The Edinburgh* (1802), *The Quarterly* (1808), *Blackwood's* (1817), *The London Magazine* (1820), and *The Westminster Review* (1824). The old *ex cathedra* style found exponents in Gifford, Jeffrey, and Lockhart, and a new criticism rose in Lamb, Coleridge, De Quincey, and—to a certain extent—in Hazlitt. With reference to drama there were numerous appreciative essays such as those of Lamb, but the main achievement of the great Romantic critics was the recovery to popularity of the Elizabethan and Jacobean dramatists. It is now customary to stay the waning popularity of the voluminous uneven poets, by the issue of selected editions. A similar service had long been needed on a larger scale with reference to the great period of English drama. Under the fire of the critics of the "classic" period, the dramatists and dramas of 1580-1642 had so receded from public view that the good could not be told from the bad. In his *Specimens from the English Dramatic Poets* (1808) Lamb happily did much—and later his criticism and that of the other Romantic critics did perhaps even more—to bring Shakespeare and especially the others into general reputation.

Paradoxically enough, however, the brilliant dramatic criticism had an evil effect on the drama. English criticism at this time was appreciative rather than historical; and little or no heed was given to the vast changes in the English theater and stage. As dramatists, Knowles, Bulwer-Lytton, Browning, and Tennyson were Shakespearean rather inadvisedly. Lamb said Shakespeare's tragedies were not primarily stage-plays. The stage and the conditions of presentation had changed so much between 1620 and 1820 that the imitators of the Elizabethans hardly wrote stage-plays, and literature and drama were destined to remain apart not only during the Romantic period but during the greater part of the age of Victoria. Well might Emerson say in 1837, "The English dramatic poets have Shakespearized now for two hundred years."

While the early nineteenth century drama in England was proceeding along its undistinguished course, two events of major importance were taking place in the drama of France. These were the battle between the classicists and the Romanticists and the development of the "well-made play."

The fight between classicism and Romanticism in France centered around the colorful personality of the youthful genius, Victor Hugo (1802-1885). In his preface to *Cromwell* (1827), Hugo stated the case for the new order. One could not follow the ancients, for the stage had changed; to follow the imitators of the ancients would be absurd. In consequence, let there be, instead of rules, liberty—under the rule solely of the general laws of art and the special laws of the branch of art in question. This lengthy and well-written preface placed its author at the head of the forces of Romanticism. The triumph of the new order, however, is dated from the first performance of *Hernani*—at the Théâtre Français, February 25, 1830. This event—the greatest French dramatic première since *The Cid* (1636)—was attended *en masse* by determined Romanticists and equally determined classicists. Applause contended with derision until the beauty of the poetry won the reluctant classicists. For Hugo and his friends—including the youthful Théophile Gautier in scarlet waistcoat and green breeches—the triumph was complete. French literature entered the nineteenth century.

Meanwhile Eugène Scribe (1791-1861) had become famous with *Une Nuit de la Garde Nationale* (1815), and was pouring forth a long series of plays of a new type. Working on Kotzebue's foundation, Scribe brought the play *en rapport* with the stage of the time. Irrelevant dialogue and declamatory passages were avoided in the new technique. The drama was now technically ready to become great again. In England, however, Scribe's plays had a bad rather than a good effect, and it was not until the "well-made play" had become imbued with ideas by Ibsen that the English drama caught again the breath of life. The harm to English drama caused by Scribe, the elder Dumas, and others, was the direct result of the absence of international copyright. Because of its basic theatricality, the French well-made play was about as well adapted to performance in London as in Paris, and managers all too often hired translators rather than encouraged playwrights.

When the stage was the darling of the court, there was always a brilliant audience, ready and able to appreciate wit or other ability. Under Victoria, however, and with the abolition of the patents, the divorce between the drama and the court was complete. In their relations to the theater as in other things, Charles II and the great Victoria were as far as the poles apart. In the more generally enlightened and more prosperous days of the nineteenth century, moreover, the theaters—which had been multiplying very rapidly even before the moribund patents were repealed—fast became the amusement places of the middle and lower classes. The new auditors cared little for brilliant characterization, subtly sparkling dialogue, or inexorability of plot. They wanted excitement and a happy ending—and there is again small wonder that the times failed to produce a comic or a tragic genius.

Of course opera and various forms of spectacle enjoyed the vogue that has continued from 1660 to the present day. Madame Catalani was the leading opera singer of the years following her début (1806) in London, but her exorbitant terms resulted in the weakening of the remainder of the company, and she soon turned to concert work. The second decade of the century saw the London production of the great Mozart operas, *Le Nozze de Figaro*, *Così fan Tutte*, and *Il Flauto Magico*. Light opera was popular too. Perhaps all that has survived is James Howard Payne's song, "Home, Sweet Home," from *Clari, or the Maid of Milan* (1823). In 1829, Malibran, famed of de Musset, made her appearance in London. In the thirties there was the "greatest" of quartets, Rabini, Lablache, Tamburini, and Grisi. Jenny Lind was the star of the later forties. Such are the high lights in a history which demands no

detail in the present work. The ballet—an importation from France—was the rage in England for several decades—until the vogue of Jenny Lind drove out or subordinated the rival art. Perhaps the most famous ballet was *Pas de Quatre* (1845), an all-star performance which included among its four principals the great Taglioni. Needless to say, spectacles relying on acrobats, trained dogs and horses, and even elephants, were common and popular.

In the field of drama or near-drama, the typical product of the early middle decades of the century was the *mélodrame*. Music has now ceased to be a usual accompaniment of the type we call melodrama. Historically, however, the element *melo-* was significant. It referred to the use of music—often in England a necessity, to avoid conflict with the monopoly rights of the patent theater. The *mélodrame*—a play of sensational incident, music, and dancing—had been popular in France. There are elements of melodrama also in eighteenth century sentimental comedy and in the bourgeois drama of Colman the younger and his fellows. The getting into and out of scrapes, escape from seemingly imminent disaster, tears and the following sunshine are common alike to sentimental drama and to melodrama. The true melodrama lays more stress on incident, however, and is really a separate type.

English melodrama secured its great triumph at nearly the same time that the French Romantic play was being carried to success by Hugo. The author was Douglass Jerrold; the date was 1829; and the place was the Surrey Theater. The play, *Black-Eyed Susan*, achieved an initial run of three hundred performances.

The plot of this play should be related. Susan is a sweet pretty creature whose lover, William, is at sea. Hatchet, a villain, threatens to evict Dame Hatley and Susan unless the latter will marry him. William returns and attacks Hatchet. Later a Captain Crosstree carries off Susan. William assaults the Captain and is on the gallows for having attacked an officer when it is discovered that the Captain had procured William's discharge and William consequently had a right to assault him. At the end, William and Susan are, of course, left in undisturbed attachment to each other. So much for the bare outline of the plot. Mention must also be made of the hairbreadth escapes, the tears—above all, of the fact that the fights were staged to music. Then one has an idea of Jerrold's triumphant melodrama—a forerunner of much of what was to follow on the British stage for the next fifty years. The plot as sketched above sounds silly to modern ears, but one must not forget that it might have been saved by a genius. Was not *Hamlet* a glorified example of a contemptible type—the tragedy-of-blood? And were there not numerous sisters of Black-Eyed Susan in the still accepted novels of the period? Jerrold wrote for the mob which went to the theater in his time. Though he had not genius enough to transmute his unpromising material into literature, he was not a nobody. He was a friend of Thackeray and was editor of *Punch* when the publishers of that periodical brought out in monthly numbers a new work, *Vanity Fair*, which had been rejected by *Colburn's Magazine*. Jerrold wrote a great number of plays, among which are *The Rent Day* (1832), *Nell Gwynne* (Covent Garden, 1833), and *A Heart of Gold* (1854). He contributed to *Punch* the celebrated "Mrs. Caudle's Curtain Lectures."

Victorian melodrama must be left temporarily, and brief consideration must be given to the literary drama of the period. Of chief interest is the short dramatic career of the great poet, Robert Browning (1812-1889). Unlike the poets of the Romantic period, Browning had true dramatic instinct. Drama is packed into almost all his poetry. His work for the stage is said to date from an after-theater supper attended by himself and the actor-manager Macready.

The latter asked Browning to write a play. The result was *Strafford*, which was produced at Covent Garden on May 1, 1837. Despite poor acting in one or two parts, poor costuming, and insufficient rehearsal, the play was a success. It was hailed by *The Constitutional* as "by far the best tragedy that has been produced at this, or any other of our great theaters for many years."

Before the end of 1840, Browning had composed three more plays—*King Victor and King Charles*, *The Return of the Druses*, and *A Blot in the 'Scutcheon*. Macready rejected *King Victor and King Charles* as worthless, and *The Return of the Druses* because it had no leading male part. The *Blot in the 'Scutcheon* was presented at Drury Lane, February 11, 1843, upon Browning's insistence, but contrary to the wish of Macready, who wanted more time. The play was withdrawn after three performances. Manager and author became estranged and Browning's career as a dramatist was over.

The question whether Browning might have made a great dramatist affords an interesting speculation. His genius is undoubted, but equally undoubted are his impatience, his ignorance of stage-craft, and his unconscious adherence to the older tradition. The revival and production of Browning plays later in the century does not belong to the story of the theater. It was a *succès d'estime* accorded to a famous poet.

Appearing nearly contemporaneously with Browning was another littérateur-dramatist, Edward Bulwer, first Baron Lytton (1803-1873). As Browning is now known chiefly as a poet, so Bulwer-Lytton is, in later times, best known for his historical novels, especially *The Last Days of Pompeii*. *The Lady of Lyons* (1838) is a play of the French Revolution, in a background of snobbish provincial society. With its unconvincing impersonations, and its all-conquering hero, it is certainly not a realistic play; but its story is easy to follow and the play was a success. *Richelieu* (1839) has kept the stage to within the twentieth century. Bulwer-Lytton's eyes were on France. His success may be due to his having learned there something of the new secrets of technique. His comedy, *Money* (1840), is occasionally revived.

Slightly later than Bulwer-Lytton was John Westland Marston (1819-1890), one of the last playwrights to make a stand for the older tragedy. Among his plays were *The Patrician's Daughter* (1842), *Strathmore* (1849), and *Marie de Méranie* (1850).

Followers and contemporaries of Jerrold in melodrama were Taylor and Boucicault. Tom Taylor (1817-1880) was a university man who made a long and valiant effort to turn out what the public wanted. Among his plays are *New Men and Old Acres* (Haymarket, 1859); *Masks and Faces*, a collaboration with Charles Reade (Haymarket, 1852); *Still Waters Run Deep* (Olympic, 1855); *Our American Cousin*, (New York, 1858); *The Overland Route* (Manchester, 1860); and *The Ticket of Leave Man* (Olympic, 1863).

Dion Boucicault (1822-1890), the son of a French refugee and an Irish mother, was famous in his time as actor, manager, and playwright. His early success, *London Assurance* (1841), though somewhat suggestive of the eighteenth century tradition, was followed by a number of melodramatic plays among which are *The Corsican Brothers* (1852), an adaptation from the elder Dumas; *Colleen Bawn* (1860); *The Streets of London* (1864); and *Arrah-na-Pogue* (1865). Boucicault lived in the United States from 1853 to 1869 and from 1875 until his death in 1890. *The Octoroon* (1861) was the most popular of his American plays.

A few years after the production of Jerrold's *Heart of Gold* (1854), Boucicault's *Colleen Bawn* (1860), and Taylor's *Ticket of Leave Man* (1863), an

Englishman came near to assuming in English drama the vitalizing leadership which soon fell to the lot of the Norwegian, Henrik Ibsen. Thomas William Robertson (1829-1871) was the son of an actor and married an actress. He was an actor himself and was one of a brilliant group which foregathered at the house of Thomas Hood. After much apprentice work, including translations from the French, he hit his stride about 1864. He is known in particular for four plays—*David Garrick* (1864), *Society* (1865), *Ours* (1866), and *Caste* (1867).

Of these plays, *David Garrick* needs little comment. It has kept the stage to within the twentieth century—as much because of playgoers' interest in its subject as because of its acceptable theatrical workmanship. *Society*, *Ours*, and *Caste* cannot be dismissed so lightly. The subjects of these and other of Robertson's plays—*Play*, *Progress*, *War*, *Birth*, etc.—certainly suggest post-Ibsen rather than pre-Ibsen drama.

Caste, Robertson's best-known play, has a simple, effective plot. In the first act, "Courtship," the Honorable George D'Alroy makes a proposal of marriage to Miss Esther Eccles, a girl of the theater. In the second act, "Marriage," complications arise, for George's mother, the Marquise de St. Maur, cannot admit the existence of a person named Eccles, and Sam Gerridge, fiancé of Esther's sister, distrusts the intrusion of the aristocracy into his circle. Once launched, however, Robertson falls in the melodramatic rut. War's alarms are sounded and there is too fine a chance for a contrast between aristocratic and proletarian love. When George must leave, his mother enjoins him to uphold the family honor whereas his wife faints from grief. In the third act, "Widowhood," Esther has left her lodgings in Mayfair and is back in the "Little House in Stangate," with her child. Her husband's friend, Captain Hawtree, and Sam Gerridge have both behaved so nobly that the way is paved for reconciliation between the classes. Humor is furnished by the voluble ex-actor, Esther's drunken father, who consents in the end to accept pensioned exile from London. The play concludes with the return of the supposedly dead George and the ensuing reconciliation of all parties. What promised to be a social drama has terminated as a sentimental melodrama. The characters have become the conventional types—the scion of a noble house, the meritorious man of the people, the sensitive heroine, and the like. On the edge of the promised land, Robertson faltered. Though not the initial examples, his plays were nevertheless the harbingers of a new era in English drama.

Robertson's second contribution to English drama was made in a much more conclusive fashion. He was the originator of the type of detailed realistic staging often thought of now as consummately offered in the productions of David Belasco. The English stage was now on the verge of its change to the modern typical form—a picture-frame, revealing reality. Robertson's best plays were given their London productions in the small Prince of Wales Theater in Tottenham Street. In this suitable place, many innovations were made. Ceilings—for the first time, it is said—were put on rooms; and actual locks were put on doors. When the situation made wind, rain, or snow appropriate, they were simulated to serve Robertson's purposes. In an autumn scene there was even a fitful falling of leaves. Food was prepared on the stage. In his *Real Conversations*, William Archer quotes W. S. Gilbert as saying of Robertson: "Why, he invented stage management. It was an unknown art before his time." In *Dramatic Opinions and Essays*, George Bernard Shaw puts the question, "Where is there a touch of nature in *Caste*?" and replies:

In the windows, in the doors, in the walls, in the carpet, in the ceiling, in the kettle, in the fireplace, in the ham, in the tea, in the bread and butter, in the bassinet, in the hats

and sticks and clothes, in the familiar phrases, the quiet, unpumped, everyday utterance; in short, in the commonplaces that are now spurned because they are commonplaces, and were then inexpressibly welcome because they were the most unexpected of novelties.

Robertson's third contribution to the theater—suggested in the passage just quoted—was an impulse toward more realism of conversation. This may have been a result equally of his good sense and of his writing for a smaller playhouse. A realistic tête-à-tête would have been unachievable in the enormous patent houses of the first few decades of the century.

In the period between 1870 and the dramatic revival of the nineties, there are several playwrights who deserve mention. James Albery (1838-1889), author of *Two Roses* (1870), followed the Robertsonian tradition, but did not advance it. Henry J. Byron (1834-1884) was the popular dramatist of the period between Robertson and Pinero; his *Our Boys* (1875) was the first play which ever ran for more than one thousand consecutive performances. The Victorian Laureate, Alfred Tennyson, and the collaborators, Gilbert and Sullivan, are important enough for separate paragraphs.

It is interesting to note that, though Tennyson was older than Browning, his career as a dramatist is dated some forty years later than that of the other great Victorian poet. Tennyson doubtless felt that he had achieved great fame in the lyric, the narrative, and the epic, and desired success in the drama as the final glory of a four-square immortal poet. Consequently—nearer seventy than sixty years old—he entered upon a career as a dramatist. Conspicuous among his efforts were three plays in which he proposed to illustrate the making of England by giving a dramatic portrayal of three great turning points in history, ecclesiastical history particularly. The trilogy consisted of *Queen Mary* (1875), *Harold* (1876), and *Becket* (1884). *Queen Mary* failed upon presentation. *Harold* was not given professional production. *Becket*, after many delays, was given a lavish production by Irving at the Lyceum (1893) the year after Tennyson's death, and ran for one hundred and twelve performances. *Becket* is not only the best of Tennyson's dramatic poems; it is a fine play. Besides the plays of this trilogy, Tennyson wrote *The Falcon* (1879), *The Cup* (1881), *The Promise of May* (1882), and *The Foresters* (New York, 1892). *The Falcon* ran for sixty-seven nights; *The Cup*, for one hundred and thirty.

Tennyson's name does not occur at all in many histories of the drama, but it deserves inclusion, for most of his plays had a stage as well as a literary history. His work, moreover, represented the practice—current from Rowe to Stephen Phillips—of copying the great Elizabethan with insufficient regard to the theatrical demands of the day. In other words, literature and drama were still awaiting fusion.

While Tennyson was attempting blank-verse drama, Gilbert and Sullivan were composing the inimitable light operas which have ever since graced the English and the American stage. In his earlier plays, *Pygmalion and Galatea* (1871), *Broken Hearts* (1875), and *Engaged* (1877), Sir William Schwenk Gilbert (1836-1911) showed considerable versatility but scarcely more than the usual order of mid-century dramatic talent. In collaboration with the composer, Sir Arthur Seymour Sullivan (1842-1900) he rose, however, to heights of absolute genius. Not before or since on the English stage has appeared such a happy combination of lyrics and music. Gilbert was a master of all the tricks of versification and his songs are unbelievably light and tripping. Sullivan's airs at once sang themselves permanently into people's hearts in England and in America. Among the better known of the collaborations are the first, *Trial by Jury* (1875), *The Pirates of Penzance* (1878), *H.M.S. Pinafore* (1878),

Patience (1881), *Iolanthe* (1882), *The Mikado* (1885), *Ruddigore* (1887), *The Gondoliers* (1889). These light operas have not passed from the stage. The D'Oyly Carte Company (which originally produced them) still presents them to crowded houses in England. Their continued vitality in America is shown by the fact that the somewhat neglected *Ruddigore* when revived with the others by the American Singers in 1920 seized the public approval to the extent of achieving a run of five weeks. More recently *Iolanthe* has had a successful run in New York.

Before leaving the pre-Ibsen drama, however, another glance should be cast at theatrical conditions. Relieved of the restrictions or the uncertainties of the late days of the patents, theaters multiplied rapidly—there became literally scores of them. Prominent in the mid-century and after were the Haymarket, Sadler's Wells, the Princess's, The Olympic, The Prince of Wales's, and The Lyceum. Since the number of theaters was unlimited, the size of the individual building tended to become smaller; thus conversational drama became possible and an important step was taken in the direction of the dramatic revival. Beginning with the introduction of illuminating gas in the patent houses in 1817, great advances were made in applying to the stage the mechanical progress of the nineteenth century. Such devices were first used in adding spectacle to the melodramas, but later helped in advancing the new realism.

More important than authors or theaters throughout the decades of the mid-century were the great actors. From Cooke in *Black-eyed Susan* to Irving in a Tennyson tragedy, the virtuosity of the performer had much to do with the popularity of a play. These were the years of dozens of still remembered actors and actresses—of Samuel Phelps, of Charles Kean, of Helen Faucit, and (somewhat later) of Henry Irving. These years in America saw the establishment of several theatrical families, saw in particular the work of Booth and the rise of Joseph Jefferson.

Shakespeare continued to hold sway over the stage—a reputation in one of the great tragedies becoming the goal of nearly every actor's ambition. Around the middle of the century, scholarship had caused the rise of a new historical criticism, and the true Shakespearean texts of the quartos and the folio came in general to replace the long-used doctored versions—except for condensation, which was now effected by omissions. Historical scholarship had taken full cognizance of the changing stage, and the continued interest in Shakespeare was no longer harmful. Men of letters now knew the necessary relationship between a dramatic author and the stage of his own time.

Gilbert's plays and the operas of Gilbert and Sullivan, the acting of Irving, the advance toward a picture-frame stage, and the new criticism have taken us to that point in the nineteenth century at which there was beginning to appear perhaps the best series of English plays since the death of Shakespeare. The new drama took its origin in Ibsen and marked a new era of continental community in the theater. It will be the subject of the next chapter.

IOLANTHE

OR, THE PEER AND THE PERI

GILBERT AND SULLIVAN

CHARACTERS

STREPHON.
THE EARL OF MOUNT ARARAT.
THE EARL OF TOLLOLLER.
PRIVATE WILLIS.
THE TRAIN-BEARER.
THE LORD CHANCELLOR.
CHORUS OF PEERS.
IOLANTHE.
THE FAIRY QUEEN.
CELIA.
LELIA.
FLETA.
PHYLLIS.
CHORUS OF FAIRIES.

ACT I—An Arcadian Landscape.
ACT II—The Palace Yard, Westminster,
at Night.

ACT I

An Arcadian Landscape

[*A river runs across the back of the stage.*]

[*Enter Fairies, led by LELIA, CELIA, FLETA. They trip across the stage, singing as they dance.*]

CHORUS

Tripping hither, tripping thither,
Nobody knows why or whither,
We must dance and we must sing
Round about our fairy ring.

Solo—CELIA

We are dainty little fairies,
Ever singing, ever dancing;
We indulge in our vagaries
In a fashion most entrancing.

If you ask the special function
Of our never-ceasing motion,
We reply, without compunction,
That we haven't any notion.

CHO.

No, we haven't any notion.
Tripping hither, etc.

Solo—LELIA

If you ask us how we live,
Lovers all essentials give:
We can ride on lovers' sighs,
Warm ourselves in lovers' eyes,
Bathe ourselves in lovers' tears,
Clothe ourselves in lovers' fears,
Arm ourselves with lovers' darts,
Hide ourselves in lovers' hearts.
When you know us, you'll discover
That we almost live on lover.

CHO.

Tripping hither, etc. .

[*At the end of the chorus
all sigh wearily.*]

CELIA. Ah, it's all very well, but
since our queen banished Iolanthe,
fairy revels have not been what they
were.

LELIA. Iolanthe was the life and
soul of Fairyland. Why, she wrote all
our songs and arranged all our dances!
We sing her songs and we trip her
measures, but we don't enjoy ourselves.

FLETA. To think that five-and-
twenty years have elapsed since she
was banished! What could she have
done to have deserved so terrible a
punishment?

LELIA. Something awful: she mar-
ried a mortal.

FLETA. Oh! Is it injudicious to
marry a mortal?

LELIA. Injudicious? It strikes at the root of the whole fairy system. By our laws the fairy who marries a mortal dies.

CELIA. But Iolanthe didn't die.

[Enter QUEEN OF THE FAIRIES.]

QUEEN. No, because your queen, who loved her with a surpassing love, commuted her sentence to penal servitude for life, on condition that she left her husband without a word of explanation and never communicated with him again.

LELIA. And that sentence of penal servitude she is now working out at the bottom of that stream?

QUEEN. Yes. But when I banished her I gave her all the pleasant places of the earth to dwell in. I'm sure I never intended that she should go and live at the bottom of that stream. It makes me perfectly wretched to think of the discomfort she must have undergone.

LELIA. To think of the damp! And her chest was always delicate.

QUEEN. And the frogs! ugh! I never shall enjoy any peace of mind until I know why Iolanthe went to live among the frogs.

FLETA. Then why not summon her and ask her?

QUEEN. Why? Because if I set eyes on her I should forgive her at once.

CELIA. Then why not forgive her? Twenty-five years! It's a long time.

LELIA. Think how we loved her!

QUEEN. Loved her? What was your love to mine? Why, she was invaluable to me! Who taught me to curl myself inside a buttercup? Iolanthe!—Who taught me to swing upon a cobweb? Iolanthe!—who taught me to dive into a dewdrop, to nestle in a nutshell, to gambol upon a gossamer? Iolanthe!

LELIA. She certainly did surprising things.

FLETA. Oh, give her back to us, great queen—for your sake, if not for ours. [All kneel in supplication.]

QUEEN. [irresolute.] Oh, I should be strong, but I am weak; I should be marble, but I am clay. Her punishment has been heavier than I intended.

I did not mean that she should live among the frogs. And—— Well! well! it shall be as you wish.

INVOCATION

QUEEN.

Iolanthe!

ALL.

From thy dark exile thou art summoned;

Come to our call,

Iolanthe!

Iolanthe!

Iolanthe!

Come to our call,

Iolanthe!

[IOLANTHE rises from the water. She is clad in tattered and sombre garments. She approaches the QUEEN with head bent and arms crossed.]

Io.

With humble breast,

And every hope laid low,

To thy behest,

Offended queen, I bow.

QUEEN.

For a dark sin against our fairy laws

We sent thee into lifelong banishment;

But Mercy holds her sway within our hearts:

Rise, thou art pardoned!

Io. Pardoned?

ALL. Pardoned!

Io. Ah!

[Her rags fall from her, and she appears clothed as a fairy. The QUEEN places a diamond coronet on her hand and embraces her. The others also embrace her.]

CHO.

Welcome to our hearts again,

Iolanthe! Iolanthe!

We have shared thy bitter pain,

Iolanthe! Iolanthe!

Every heart and every hand

In our loving little band

Welcomes thee to Fairyland,

Iolanthe!

QUEEN. And now tell me: with all the world to choose from, why on earth did you decide to live at the bottom of that stream?

Io. To be near my son, Strephon.

QUEEN. Your son! Bless my heart! I didn't know you had a son.

Io. He was born soon after I left my husband by your royal command, but he doesn't even know of his father's existence.

FLETA. How old is he?

Io. Twenty-four.

LELIA. Twenty-four. No one to look at you would think you had a son of twenty-four? But of course that's one of the advantages of being immortal—we never grow old. Is he pretty?

Io. He's extremely pretty, but he's inclined to be stout.

ALL. [*disappointed.*] Oh!

QUEEN. I see no objection to stoutness in moderation.

CELIA. And what is he?

Io. He's an Arcadian shepherd, and he loves Phyllis, a ward in Chancery.

CELIA. A mere shepherd, and he half a fairy!

Io. He's a fairy down to the waist, but his legs are mortal.

CELIA. Dear me!

QUEEN. I have no reason to suppose that I am more curious than other people, but I confess I should like to see a person who is a fairy down to the waist, but whose legs are mortal.

Io. Nothing easier, for here he comes.

[*Enter STREPHON, singing and dancing, and playing on a flageolet. He does not see the FAIRIES, who retire up stage as he enters.*]

Song—STREPHON

Good-morrow, good mother;
 Good mother, good-morrow!
 By some means or other
 Pray banish your sorrow!
 With joy beyond telling
 My bosom is swelling,
 So join in a measure
 Expressive of pleasure,

For I'm to be married to-day, to-day—

Yes, I'm to be married to-day.

CHO.

Yes, he's to be married to-day, to-day—

Yes, he's to be married to-day.

Io. Then the Lord Chancellor has at last given his consent to your marriage with his beautiful ward, Phyllis?

STREPH. Not he, indeed! To all my tearful prayers he answers me, "A shepherd lad is no fit helpmate for a ward of Chancery." I stood in court, and there I sang him songs of Arcadee, with flageolet accompaniment, in vain. At first he seemed amused, so did the Bar, but, quickly wearying of my song and pipe, he bade me get out. A servile usher then, in crumpled bands and rusty bombazine, led me, still singing, into Chancery Lane! I'll go no more; I'll marry her to-day, and brave the upshot, be what it may!—[*sees FAIRIES.*] But who are these?

Io. Oh, Strephon, rejoice with me, my queen has pardoned me!

STREPH. Pardoned you, mother? This is good news, indeed!

Io. And these ladies are my beloved sisters.

STREPH. Your sisters? Then they are my aunts. [*Kneels.*]

QUEEN. A pleasant piece of news for your bride on her wedding-day!

STREPH. Hush! My bride knows nothing of my fairyhood. I dare not tell her, lest it frighten her. She thinks me mortal, and prefers me so.

LELIA. Your fairyhood doesn't seem to have done you much good.

STREPH. Much good? It's the curse of my existence! What's the use of being half a fairy? My body can creep through a keyhole, but what's the good of that when my legs are left kicking behind? I can make myself invisible down to the waist, but that's of no use when my legs remain exposed to view. My brain is a fairy brain, but from the waist downward I'm a gibbering idiot. My upper half is immortal, but my lower half grows older every day, and

some day or other must die of old age. What's to become of my upper half when I've buried my lower half, I really don't know.

QUEEN. I see your difficulty, but with a fairy brain you should seek an intellectual sphere of action. Let me see: I've a borough or two at my disposal; would you like to go into Parliament?

Io. A fairy member! That would be delightful.

STREPH. I'm afraid I should do no good there. You see, down to the waist I'm a Tory of the most determined description, but my legs are a couple of confounded Radicals, and on a division they'd be sure to take me into the wrong lobby. You see, they're two to one, which is a strong working majority.

QUEEN. Don't let that distress you; you shall be returned as a Liberal-Conservative, and your legs shall be our peculiar care.

STREPH. [*bowing.*] I see Your Majesty does not do things by halves.

QUEEN. No; we are fairies down to the feet.

Ensemble

QUEEN.

Fare thee well, attractive stranger.

FAIRIES.

Fare thee well, attractive stranger.

QUEEN.

Shouldst thou be in doubt or danger,
Peril or perplexitee,

Call us, and we'll come to thee—

FAIRIES.

Call us, and we'll come to thee.
Tripping hither, tripping thither,
Nobody knows why or whither,
We must now be taking wing
To another fairy ring.

[FAIRIES and QUEEN trip off,
IOLANTHE, who takes an affectionate farewell of her son, going off last.]

[Enter PHYLLIS, singing and dancing, and accompanying herself on a flageolet.]

Song—PHYLLIS

Good-morrow, good lover;

Good lover, good-morrow!

I prithee discover,

Steal, purchase, or borrow,

Some means of concealing

The care you are feeling,

And join in a measure

Expressive of pleasure;

For we're to be married to-day, to-day—

For we're to be married to-day.

BOTH.

Yes, we're to be married, etc.

STREPH. My Phyllis! And to-day we're to be made happy forever!

PHYL. Well, we're to be married.

STREPH. It's the same thing.

PHYL. Well, I suppose it is. But oh, Strephon, I tremble at the step we're taking. I believe it's penal servitude for life to marry a ward of court without the Lord Chancellor's consent. I shall be of age in two years. Don't you think you could wait two years?

STREPH. Two years! You can't have seen yourself. Here, look at that, [*offering mirror*] and tell me if you think it's reasonable to expect me to wait two years?

PHYL. No; you're quite right; it's asking too much—one must be reasonable.

STREPH. Besides, who knows what will happen in two years? Why, you might fall in love with the Lord Chancellor himself by that time.

PHYL. Yes, he's a clever old gentleman.

STREPH. As it is, half the House of Lords are sighing at your feet.

PHYL. The House of Lords is certainly extremely attentive.

STREPH. Attentive? I should think they were! Why did five-and-twenty Liberal peers come down to shoot over your grass-plot last autumn? It couldn't have been the sparrows. Why did five-and-twenty Conservative peers come down to fish in your pond? Don't tell me it was the goldfish! No, no.

Delays are dangerous, and if we are to marry, the sooner the better.

Duet—PHYLLIS and STREPHON

PHYL.

None shall part us from each other;
One in love and life are we—
All in all to one another,
I to thee and thou to me.

PHYLLIS

STREPHON

Thou the tree, and I t h e flower;	I the tree, and thou the flower;
Thou the idol, I the throng;	I the idol, thou the throng;
Thou the day, and I the hour;	I the day, and thou the hour;
Thou the singer, I the song;	I the singer, thou the song;
Thou the stream, and I the willow;	I the stream, and thou the willow;
Thou the sculp- tor, I the clay;	I the sculptor, thou the clay;
Thou the ocean, I the billow;	I the ocean, thou the billow;
Thou the sun- rise, I the day.	I the sunrise, thou the day.

PHYL.

Ever thine since that fond meeting,
When in joy I woke to find
Thine the heart within me beating—
Mine the love that heart enshrined.

PHYLLIS

STREPHON

Thou the tree, and I t h e flower;	I the tree, and thou the flower;
Thou the idol, I the throng;	I the idol, thou the throng;
Thou the day, and I the hour;	I the day, and thou the hour;
Thou the singer, I the song;	I the singer, thou the song;

Thou the stream, and I the willow;	I the stream, and thou the willow;
Thou the sculp- tor, I the clay;	I the sculptor, thou the clay;
Thou the ocean, I the billow;	I the ocean, thou the billow;
Thou the sun- rise, I the day.	I the sunrise, thou the day.

[*Exeunt STREPHON and PHYLLIS.*]

[*March. Enter procession of Peers, headed by the EARL OF MOUNT ARARAT and EARL OF TOLLOLLER.*]

CHORUS

Loudly let the trumpet bray—
Tantantara!
Gayly bang the sounding brasses—
Tzing!
As upon its lordly way
This unique procession passes!
Tantantara! tzing! boom!
Bow, ye lower, middle classes!
Bow, ye tradesmen! bow, ye masses!
Blow the trumpets, bang the brasses!
Tantantara! tzing! boom!
We are peers of highest station,
Paragons of legislation,
Pillars of the British nation!
Tantantara! tzing! boom!

[*Enter the LORD CHANCELLOR, followed by his train-bearer.*]

Song—LORD CHANCELLOR

The law is the true embodiment
Of everything that's excellent:
It has no kind of fault or flaw;
And I, my lords, embody the law.
The constitutional guardian I
Of pretty young wards in Chancery.
All are agreeable girls, and none
Are over the age of twenty-one.
A pleasant occupation for
A rather susceptible Chancellor!

ALL.

A pleasant, etc.

But, though the compliment implied
Inflates me with legitimate pride,

It nevertheless can't be denied
That it has its inconvenient side;
For I'm not so old and not so plain,
And I'm quite prepared to marry
again;
But there'd be the deuce to pay in
the Lords
If I fell in love with one of my
wards;
Which rather tries my temper, for
I'm such a susceptible Chancellor!

ALL.

Which rather, etc.

And every one who'd marry a ward
Must come to me for my accord;
And in my court I sit all day,
Giving agreeable girls away—
With one for him, and one for he,
And one for you, and one for ye,
And one for thou, and one for thee;
But never, oh never, a one for me;
Which is exasperating for
A highly susceptible Chancellor!

ALL.

Which is, etc.

[Enter LORD TOLLOLLER.]

LD. TOLL. And now, my lord, suppose we proceed to the business of the day?

LD. CHAN. By all means. Phyllis, who is a ward of court, has so powerfully affected your lordships that you have appealed to me in a body to give her to whichever one of you she may think proper to select; and a noble lord has gone to her cottage to request her immediate attendance. It would be idle to deny that I, myself, have the misfortune to be singularly attracted by this young person. My regard for her is rapidly undermining my constitution. Three months ago I was a stout man. I need say no more. If I could reconcile it with my duty, I should unhesitatingly award her to myself, for I can conscientiously say that I know no man who is so well fitted to render her exceptionally happy. But such an award would be open to misconstruction, and therefore, at whatever personal inconvenience, I waive my claim.

LD. TOLL. My lord, I desire, on the part of this House, to express its sincere sympathy with your lordship's most painful position.

LD. CHAN. I thank your lordships. The feelings of a Lord Chancellor who is in love with a ward of court are not to be envied. What is his position? Can he give his own consent to his own marriage with his own ward? Can he marry his own ward without his own consent? And if he marries his own ward without his own consent, can he commit himself for contempt of his own court? can he appear by counsel before himself to move for arrest of his own judgment? Ah, my lords, it is indeed painful to have to sit upon a woosack which is stuffed with such thorns as these.

[Enter LORD MOUNT ARARAT.]

LD. MOUNT. My lords, I have the pleasure to inform your lordships that I have succeeded in persuading the young lady to present herself at the bar of this House.

[Enter PHYLLIS.]

Recitative—PHYLLIS

My well-loved lord and guardian
dear,
You summoned me, and I am here.

CHO. OF PEERS.

Oh, rapture! how beautiful!
How gentle! how dutiful!

Solo—LORD TOLLOLLER

Of all the young ladies I know,
This pretty young lady's the
fairest;
Her lips have the rosiest show,
Her eyes are the richest and rarest.
Her origin's lowly, it's true,
But of birth and position I've
plenty;
I've grammar and spelling for two,
And blood and behavior for
twenty.

CHO.

Her origin's lowly, it's true,
But he's grammar and spelling for
two;

Of birth and position he's plenty,
With blood and behavior for
twenty.

Solo—EARL OF MOUNT ARARAT

Though the views of the House have
diverged

On every conceivable motion,
All questions of party are merged
In a frenzy of love and devotion.
If you ask us distinctly to say
What party we claim to belong to,
We reply, without doubt or delay,
The party I'm singing this song to.

CHO.

If you ask us distinctly to say,
We reply, without doubt or delay,
That the party we claim to belong to
Is the party we're singing this song
to.

Solo—PHYLLIS

I'm very much pained to refuse,
But I'll stick to my pipes and my
tabors;
I can spell all the words that I use,
And my grammar's as good as my
neighbor's.
As for birth, I was born like the rest;
My behavior is rustic, but hearty;
And I know where to turn for the
best
When I want a particular party.

CHO.

Though her station is none of the
best,
We suppose she was born like the
rest;
And she knows where to look for her
hearty
When she wants a particular party.

Recitative—PHYLLIS

Nay, tempt me not:
To wealth I'll not be bound:
In lowly cot
Alone is virtue found.

ALL.

No, no, indeed; high rank will never
hurt you:
The peerage is not destitute of virtue.

Ballad—LORD TOLLOLLER

Spurn not the nobly born
With love affected,
Nor treat with virtuous scorn
The well-connected.
High rank involves no shame;
We boast an equal claim
With him of humble name
To be respected.
Blue blood!
Blue blood!
When virtuous love is sought,
Thy power is naught,
Though dating from the Flood,
Blue blood! ah, blue blood.

CHO.

When virtuous love, etc.

Spare us the bitter pain,
With stern denials,
Nor with low-born disdain
Augment our trials.
Hearts just as pure and fair
May beat in Belgrave Square
As in the lowly air
Of Seven Dials.
Blue blood!
Blue blood!
Of what avail art thou
To serve us now,
Though dating from the Flood,
Blue blood? ah, blue blood!

CHO.

Of what avail art thou, etc.

Recitative—PHYLLIS

My lords, it may not be;
With grief my heart is riven;
You waste your words on me,
For, ah! my heart is given.

ALL.

Given?

PHYL.

Yes, given!

ALL.

Oh, horror!

Recitative—LORD CHANCELLOR

And who has dared to brave our high
displeasure,
And thus defy our definite command?

[Enter STREPHON; PHYLLIS rushes to his arms.]

STREPH.

'Tis I, young Strephon; mine the
priceless treasure;

Against the world I claim my dar-
ling's hand.

ALL.

Ah! rash one, tremble!

STREPH.

A shepherd I—

ALL.

A shepherd hel

STREPH.

Of Arcady—

ALL.

Of Arcadee!

STREPH. and PHYL.

Betrothed are we!

ALL.

Betrothed are they—

STREPH. and PHYL.

And mean to be

Espoused to-day.

Ensemble

STREPH.

THE OTHERS

A shepherd I

A shepherd he

Of Arcady;

Of Arcadee;

Betrothed are
we

Betrothed is he,
we

And mean to be

And means to be

Espoused to-day. Espoused to-day.

LD. CHAN. Ah! rash one, tremble!

Duet—LORD MOUNT. and LORD TOLL.
[aside to Peers.]

'Neath this blow,

Worse than stab of dagger,

Though we mo-

mentarily stagger,

In each heart

Proud are we innately:

Let's depart,

Dignified and stately—

ALL.

Let's depart,

Dignified and stately.

CHORUS OF PEERS

Though our hearts she's badly bruising
In another suitor choosing,

Let's pretend it's most amusing.

Ha! ha! ha! ha! tzing! boom!

[Exeunt all the Peers, marching
round stage with much dignity.

LORD CHANCELLOR separates

PHYLLIS from STREPHON, and

orders her off. Manent LORD

CHANCELLOR and STREPHON.]

LD. CHAN. Now, sir, what excuse
have you to offer for having disobeyed
an order of the court of Chancery?

STREPH. My lord, I know no court
of Chancery; I go by Nature's acts of
Parliament. The bees, the breeze, the
seas, the rocks, the brooks, the gales,
the vales, the fountains, and the moun-
tains, cry, "You love this maiden; take
her, we command you!" 'Tis writ in
heaven by the bright-barbed dart that
leaps forth into lurid light from each
grim thunder-cloud. The very rain
pours forth her sad and sodden sym-
pathy. When chorused Nature bids
me take my love, shall I reply, "Nay,
but a certain Chancellor forbids it?"
Sir, you are England's Lord High Chan-
cellor, but are you Chancellor of birds
and trees, king of the winds and prince
of thunder-clouds?

LD. CHAN. No. It's a nice point; I
don't know that I ever met it before.
But my difficulty is, that at present
there's no evidence before the court
that chorused Nature has interested
herself in the matter.

STREPH. No evidence? You have
my word for it. I tell you that she
bade me take my love.

LD. CHAN. Ah! but, my good sir,
you mustn't tell us what she told
you; it's not evidence. Now, an affi-
davit from a thunderstorm or a few
words on oath from a heavy shower
would meet with all the attention they
deserve.

STREPH. And have you the heart to
apply the prosaic rules of evidence to a
case which bubbles over with poetical
emotion?

LD. CHAN. Distinctly. I have

always kept my duty strictly before my eyes; and it is to that fact that I owe my advancement to my present distinguished position.

Song—LORD CHANCELLOR

When I went to the Bar as a very young man

(Said I to myself, said I),
I'll work on a new and original plan
(Said I to myself, said I):

I'll never assume that a rogue or a thief
Is a gentleman worthy implicit belief
Because his attorney has sent me a brief

(Said I to myself, said I).

I'll never throw dust in a juryman's eyes,

(Said I to myself, said I),
Or hoodwink a judge who is not otherwise

(Said I to myself, said I),
Or assume that the witnesses summoned in force

In Exchequer, Queen's Bench, Common Pleas, or Divorce
Have perjured themselves as a matter of course

(Said I to myself, said I).

Ere I go into court I will read my brief through

(Said I to myself, said I),
And I'll never take work I'm unable to do

(Said I to myself, said I);
My learned profession I'll never disgrace

By taking a fee, with a grin on my face,
When I haven't been there to attend to the case

(Said I to myself, said I).

In other professions in which men engage

(Said I to myself, said I),
The Army, the Navy, the Church, and the Stage

(Said I to myself, said I),
Professional license, if carried too far,
Your chance of promotion will certainly mar;

And I fancy the rule might apply to the Bar

(Said I to myself, said I).

[*Exit* LORD CHANCELLOR.]

[*To* STREPHON, *who is in tears, enters* IOLANTHE.]

STREPH. Oh, Phyllis! Phyllis! To be taken from you just as I was on the point of making you my own! Oh, it's too much! it is too much!

Io. My son in tears, and on his wedding-day?

STREPH. My wedding-day! Oh, mother, weep with me, for the law has interposed between us, and the Lord Chancellor has separated us forever!

Io. The Lord Chancellor!—[*aside*.] Oh, if he did but know!

STREPH. [*overhearing her*.] If he did but know—what?

Io. No matter. The Lord Chancellor has no power over you. Remember, you are half a fairy; you can defy him—down to the waist.

STREPH. Yes, but from the waist downward he can commit me to prison for years. Of what avail is it that my body is free if my legs are working out seven years' penal servitude?

Io. True. But take heart; our queen has promised you her special protection. I'll go to her and lay your peculiar case before her.

STREPH. My beloved mother, how can I repay the debt I owe you?

FINALE

Quartette

[*As it commences the Peers appear at the back, advancing unseen and on tiptoe. MOUNT ARARAT and TOLLOLLER lead PHYLLIS between them, who listens in horror to what she hears.*]

STREPH. [*to* IOLANTHE.]

When darkly looms the day,
And all is dull and gray,
To chase the gloom away
On thee I'll call.

PHYL. [*speaking aside to MOUNT.*]

What was that?

LD. MOUNT. [*aside to PHYLLIS.*]

I think I heard him say
That on a rainy day
To while the time away,
On her he'd call.

CHO.

We think we heard him say, etc.

[PHYLLIS *much agitated at her lover's supposed faithlessness.*]

Io. [*to STREPHON.*]

When tempests wreck thy bark,
And all is drear and dark,
If thou shouldst need an ark,
I'll give thee one.

PHYL. [*speaking aside to TOLLOLLER.*]

What was that?

LD. TOLL. [*aside to PHYLLIS.*]

I heard the minx remark
She'd meet him after dark
Inside St. James's Park,
And give him one.

CHO.

We heard the minx remark, etc.

Io.

The prospect's not so bad;
Thy heart, so sore and sad,
May very soon be glad
As summer sun;
But while the sky is dark,
And tempests wreck thy bark,
If thou shouldst need an ark,
I'll give thee one.

PHYL. [*revealing herself.*]

Ah!

[IOLANTHE and STREPHON *much confused.*]

Oh, shameless one, tremble!
Nay, do not endeavor
Thy fault to dissemble;
We part, and forever.
I worshipped him blindly,
He worships another —

STREPH.

Attend to me kindly:
This lady's my mother.

LD. TOLL.

This lady's his—*what?*

STREPH.

This lady's my mother.

TENORS.

This lady's his—*what?*

BASSES.

He says she's his mother.

[*They point derisively to IOLANTHE, laughing heartily at her. She clings for protection to STREPHON.*]

[*Enter LORD CHANCELLOR; IOLANTHE veils herself.*]

LD. CHAN.

What means this mirth unseemly
That shakes the listening earth?

LD. TOLL.

The joke is good, extremely,
And justifies our mirth.

LD. MOUNT.

This gentleman is seen
With a maid of seventeen,
A-taking of his *dolce far niente*;
And wonders he'd achieve,
For he asks us to believe
She's his mother, and he's near five-
and-twenty!

ALL.

Ha! ha! ha! ha! ha!

LD. CHAN. [*sternly.*]

Recollect yourself, I pray,
And be careful what you say;
As the ancient Romans said, *festina lente*;
For I really do not see
How so young a girl could be
The mother of a man of five-and-
twenty.

ALL.

Ha! ha! ha! ha! ha!

STREPH.

My lord, of evidence I have no
dearth:
She is—has been—my mother from
my birth.

Ballad—STREPHON

In babyhood
Upon her lap I lay;
With infant food
She moistened my clay;
Had she withheld
The succor she supplied,
By hunger quelled
Your Strephon might have died.

LD. CHAN. [*much moved.*]

Had that refreshment been denied,
Indeed our Strephon might have died.

ALL. [*much affected.*]

Had that refreshment been denied,
Indeed our Strephon might have died.

LD. MOUNT.

But as she's not
His mother, it appears,
Why weep these hot,
Unnecessary tears?
And by what laws
Should we so joyously
Rejoice because
Our Strephon didn't die?
Oh, rather let us pipe our eye
Because our Strephon didn't die.

ALL.

That's very true; let's pipe our eye
Because our Strephon didn't die.
[*All weep. Exit IOLANTHE.*]

PHYL.

Go, trait'rous one; for ever we must
part;
To one of you, my lords, I give my
heart.

ALL.

Oh, rapture!

STREPH.

Hear me, Phyllis, ere you leave me.

PHYL.

Not a word; you did deceive me.

ALL.

Not a word; you did deceive her!

Ballad—PHYLLIS

For riches and rank I do not long;
Their pleasures are false and vain:
I gave up the love of a lordly throng
For the love of a simple swain;
But now that that simple swain's untrue,
With sorrowful heart I turn to you—
A heart that's aching,
Quaking, breaking,
As sorrowful hearts are wont to do.

The riches and rank that you befall
Are the only baits you use;
So the richest and rankiest of you all
My sorrowful heart shall choose.
As none are so noble, none so rich,

As this couple of lords, I'll find a niche
In my heart that's aching,
Quaking, breaking,
For one of you two; and I don't care
which.

Ensemble

PHYL. [*to Lds. MOUNT. and TOLL.*]

To you I give my heart so rich.

LDS. MOUNT. and TOLL. [*puzzled.*]

To which?

PHYL.

I do not care.

To you I yield; it is my doom.

LORDS.

To whom?

PHYL.

I'm not aware.

I'm yours for life, if you but choose.

LORDS.

She's whose?

PHYL.

That's your affair.

I'll be a countess, shall I not?

LORDS.

Of what?

PHYL.

I do not care. •

TENORS.

To them she gives her heart so rich.

BASSES.

To which?

TENORS.

She won't declare.

BASSES.

To them she yields; it is her doom.

TENORS.

To whom?

BASSES.

I'm not aware.

TENORS.

She's theirs for life, if they but
choose.

BASSES.

She's whose?

TENORS.

That's her affair.

BASSES.

She'll be a countess, will she not?

TENORS.

Of what?

BASSES.

We're not aware.

ALL.

Lucky little lady!
 Strephon's lot is shady;
 Rank, it seems is vital;
 "Countess" is the title;
 But of what, I'm not aware.

STREPH.

Can I, inactive, see my fortune
 fade?

No, no!—

Mighty protectress, hasten to my
 aid!

[Enter FAIRIES, tripping, headed by
 CELIA, LELIA, and FLETA, and
 followed by QUEEN.]

CHORUS OF FAIRIES

Tripping hither, tripping thither,
 Nobody knows why or whither;
 Why you want us we don't know,
 But you've summoned us, and so
 Enter all the little fairies
 To their usual tripping measure.
 To oblige you all our care is;
 Tell us, pray, what is your pleasure!

STREPH.

The lady of my love has caught me
 talking to another.

ALL.

Oh, fie! Strephon is a rogue.

STREPH.

I tell her very plainly that the lady
 is my mother.

ALL.

Taradiddle! taradiddle! tol-lol-lay!

STREPH.

She won't believe my statement, and
 declares we must be parted,
 Because on a career of double-deal-
 ing I have started;
 Then gives her hand to one of these,
 and leaves me broken-hearted.

ALL.

Taradiddle! taradiddle! tol-lol-lay!

QUEEN. Ah, cruel ones, to part two

faithful lovers from each other!

ALL. Oh, fie! Strephon is a rogue.

QUEEN. You've done him an injustice,
 for the lady is his mother.ALL. Taradiddle! taradiddle! tol-lol-
 lay!LD. CHAN. That fable perhaps may
 serve his turn as well as any other.

[Aside.] I didn't see her face, but
 if they fondled one another.
 And she's but seventeen, I don't be-
 lieve it was his mother.

ALL.

Taradiddle! taradiddle! tol-lol-lay!

LD. TOLL.

I've often had a use
 For a thoroughbred excuse
 Of a sudden (which is English for
 "repente"),

But of all I ever heard
 This is much the most absurd,
 For she's seventeen, and he is five-
 and-twenty.

FAIRIES.

Tho' she is seventeen, and he is
 four- or five-and-twenty,
 Oh fie! Strephon is no rogue.

LD. MOUNT.

Now listen, pray, to me,
 For this paradox will be
 Carried, nobody at all *contradicente*:
 Her age upon the date
 Of his birth was minus eight,
 If she's seventeen, and he's five-and-
 twenty.

He says she is his mother, and he's
 four- or five-and-twenty.

ALL.

To say she is his mother is an utter
 bit of folly.

Oh fie! Strephon is a rogue.

Perhaps his brain is addled, and it's
 very melancholy;

Taradiddle! taradiddle! tol-lol-
 lay!

I wouldn't say a word that could be
 construed as injurious,
 But to find a mother younger than her
 son is very curious;
 And that's the kind of mother that is
 usually spurious.

Taradiddle! taradiddle! tol-lol-lay!

LD. CHAN.

Go away, madam!

I should say, madam,

You display, madam,

Shocking taste.

It is rude, madam,

To intrude, madam,

With your brood, madam—

Brazen-faced!

You come here, madam,
Interfere, madam,
With a peer, madam
(I am one);
You're aware, madam,
What you dare, madam;
So take care, madam,
And begone!

Ensemble

FAIRIES [to
QUEEN.]

PEERS

Let us stay, Go away, madam!
madam;

I should say, I should say,
madam, madam,
They display, You display,
madam, madam,
Shocking taste. Shocking taste.

It is rude, madam, It is rude, madam,
To allude, madam, To intrude,
madam,

To your brood, With your brood,
madam— madam—
Brazen-faced! Brazen-faced!

We don't fear, You come here,
madam, madam,
Any peer, madam, Interfere, madam,
Though, my dear With a peer,
madam, madam
This is one. (I am one).

They will stare, You're aware,
madam, madam,

When aware, What you dare,
madam, madam;

What they dare, So take care,
madam— madam,

What they've And begone!
done!

QUEEN. [*furious.*]

Bearded by these puny mortals,
I will launch from fairy portals
All the most terrific thunders
In my armory of wonders.

PHYL. [*aside.*]

Surely, these must be immortals.
Should they launch from fairy por-
tals

All their most terrific wonders,
We should then repent our blunders.

QUEEN.

Oh, Chancellor unwary,
It's highly necessary
Your tongue to teach
Respectful speech—
Your attitude to vary.

Your badinage so airy,
Your manner arbitrary,
Are out of place
When face to face
With an influential fairy.

ALL THE PEERS. [*aside.*]

We never knew
We were speaking to
An influential fairy.

LD. CHAN.

A plague on this vagary!
I'm in a nice quandary:
Of hasty tone
With dames unknown
I ought to be more chary.
It seems that she's a fairy
From Anderson's library;
And I took her for
The proprietor
Of a ladies' seminary.

ALL.

He }
We } took her for

The proprietor
Of a ladies' seminary.

QUEEN.

When next your Houses do assemble
You may tremble.

LELIA.

Our wrath, when gentlemen offend us,
Is tremendous.

CELIA.

They meet, who underrate our calling
Doom appalling.

QUEEN.

Take down our sentence as we speak
it,
And he shall wreak it

[*Indicating STREPHON.*]

Henceforth, Strephon, cast away
Crooks and pipes and ribbons so gay,
Flocks and herds that bleat and low;
Into Parliament you go.

FAIRIES.

Into Parliament he shall go.
Backed by our supreme authority,

He'll command a large majority.
Into Parliament he shall go.

QUEEN.

In the Parliamentary hive,
Liberal or Conservative,
Whig, or Tory, I don't know;
But into Parliament you shall go.

FAIRIES.

Into Parliament etc.

PEERS.

Ah, spare us!

QUEEN. [*speaking through music.*]

Every bill and every measure
That may gratify his pleasure,
Though your fury it arouses,
Shall be passed by both your Houses.
You shall sit, if he sees reason,
Through the grouse-and-salmon sea-
son;

He shall end the cherished rights
You enjoy on Wednesday nights;
He shall prick that annual blister,
Marriage with deceased wife's sister;
He shall offer to the many
Peerages at three a penny;
Titles shall ennoble then
All the common councilmen;
Earldoms shall be sold apart
Daily at the auction-mart;
Peers shall teem in Christendom,
And a duke's exalted station
Be attainable by com-
petitive examination.

FAIRIES and
PHYLLIS

PEERS

Oh, horror!

Their horror

But we'll dissem-
ble

They can't dis-
semble,

The coward fear
that makes
us tremble.

Nor hide the fear
that makes
them trem-
ble.

Ensemble

PEERS

FAIRIES, - PHYL.,
and STREPH.

Young Strephon is
the kind of
lout

With Strephon for
your foe, no
doubt,

We do not care a
fig about.

A fearful pros-
pect opens out;

We cannot
say

And who
shall say

What evils
may

What evils
may

Result in conse-
quence;

Result in con-
sequence?

But lordly ven-
geance will
pursue

A hideous ven-
geance will
pursue

All kinds of com-
mon people
who

All noblemen who
venture to

Oppose our
views,

Oppose his
views,

Or boldly
choose

Or boldly
choose

To offer us of-
fence.

To offer him
offence.

He'd better fly at
humble game,

'Twill plunge them
into grief and
shame;

Or our forbear-
ance he must
claim,

His kind forbear-
ance they
must claim

If he'd es-
cape

If they'd es-
cape

In any
shape

In any
shape

A very painful
wrench.

A very painful
wrench.

Your powers we
dauntlessly
pooh-pooh!

Although our
threats you
may pooh-
pooh!

A dire revenge
will fall on
you

A dire revenge
will fall on
you

If you be-
siege

Should he
besiege

Our high
prestige

Your high
prestige

(The word
"prestige" is
French).

(The word
"prestige" is
French).

PEERS.

Our lordly style

You shall not quench
With base *canaille*.

FAIRIES.

(That word is French.)

PEERS.

Distinction ebbs
Before a herd
Of vulgar *plebs*.

FAIRIES.

(A Latin word.)

PEERS.

'Twould fill with joy
And madness stark
The *oi πολλοι*

FAIRIES.

(A Greek remark.)

PEERS

FAIRIES

You needn't wait:	We will not wait;
Away you fly!	We go skyhigh;
Your threatened	Our threatened
hate	hate
We thus defy!	You won't defy.

FAIRIES.

Your lordly style
We'll quickly quench
With base *canaille*.

PEERS.

(That word is French.)

FAIRIES.

Distinction ebbs
Before a herd
Of vulgar *plebs*.

PEERS.

(A Latin word.)

FAIRIES.

'Twould fill with joy
And madness stark
The *oi πολλοι*

PEERS.

(A Greek remark.)

PEERS

FAIRIES

You needn't wait:	We will not wait;
Away you fly!	We go skyhigh;
Your threatened	Our threatened
hate	hate
We thus defy!	You won't defy.

[PEERS and FAIRIES take attitudes
of defiance.]

End of Act I

ACT II

Palace Yard, Westminster, Night

[*Westminster Hall, L. PRIVATE*
WILLIS discovered on Sentry,
R.]

Song—WILLIS

When all night long a chap remains
On sentry-go, to chase monotony
He exercises of his brains;
That is, assuming that he's got any.
Though never nurtured in the lap
Of luxury, yet, I admonish you,
I am an intellectual chap,
And think of things that would astonish you.
I often think it's comical (fal, la!, la!)
How Nature always does contrive (fal, la!, la!)
That every boy and every gal
That's born into the world alive
Is either a little Liberal
Or else a little Conservative.
Fal, la!, la!

When in that house M. Ps. divide,
If they've a brain and cerebellum too,
They've got to leave that brain outside
And vote just as their leaders tell 'em to.
But then the prospect of a lot
Of dull M. Ps. in close proximity,
A-thinking for themselves, is what
No man can face with equanimity.
Then let's rejoice with loud fal, la!, fal, la!, la!
That Nature wisely does contrive
(fal, la!, la!)
That every boy and every gal
That's born into the world alive
Is either a little Liberal
Or else a little Conservative.
Fal, la!, la!

[*Enter FAIRIES, R., tripping, and led by LELIA, CELIA, and FLETA.*]

CHORUS

Strephon's a member of Parliament,
Carries every bill he chooses;
To his measures all assent,
Showing that fairies have their uses.

Whigs and Tories dim their glories,
Giving an ear to all his stories;
Lords and Commons are both in the
blues;

Strephon makes them shake in their
shoes—

Shake in their shoes—
Strephon makes them shake in their
shoes!

[*Enter PEERS from Westminster Hall.*]

CHORUS OF PEERS

Strephon's a member of Parliament,
Running amuck of all abuses;
His unqualified assent

Somehow nobody refuses.
Whigs and Tories dim their glories,
Giving an ear to all his stories,
Carrying every bill he may wish;
Here's a pretty kettle of fish—
Here's a pretty kettle of fish!

CHORUS OF PEERS and FAIRIES.

Strephon's a member of Parliament—
Carries ev'ry bill he chooses;
To his measures all assent,
Carrying ev'ry bill he may wish—
Carrying ev'ry bill he may wish;
Here's a pretty kettle of fish!

[*Enter LORDS TOLLoller and
MOUNT ARARAT.*]

LD. MOUNT. Perfectly disgraceful;
disgusting!

CELIA. You seem annoyed.

LD. MOUNT. Annoyed! I should
think so! Why, this ridiculous protégé
of yours is playing the deuce with
everything! To-night is the second
reading of his bill to throw the peerage
open to competitive examination.

LD. TOLL. And he'll carry it, too!

LD. MOUNT. Carry it? Of course he
will! He's a Parliamentary Pickford
—he carries everything.

LELIA. Yes. If you please, that's
our fault.

LD. MOUNT. The deuce it is!

CELIA. Yes; we influence the mem-
bers, and compel them to vote just as
he wishes them to.

LELIA. It's our system; it shortens
the debates.

LD. TOLL. Well, but think what it
all means! I don't so much mind for
myself, but with a House of Peers with
no grandfathers worth mentioning the
country must go to the dogs.

LELIA. I suppose it must.

LD. MOUNT. I don't want to say a
word against brains—I've great respect
for brains. I often wish I had some
myself—but with a House of Peers
composed exclusively of people of in-
tellect, what's to become of the House
of Commons?

LELIA. I never thought of that.

LD. MOUNT. This comes of women
interfering in politics. It so happens
that if there is an institution in Great
Britain which is not susceptible of any
improvement at all, it is the House of
Peers.

Song—LORD MOUNT.

When Britain *really* ruled the waves
(In good Queen Bess's time)
The House of Peers made no pre-
tence
To intellectual eminence
Or scholarship sublime;
Yet Britain won her proudest bays
In good Queen Bess's glorious days.

CHO.

Yes, Britain won, etc.

When Wellington thrashed Bona-
parte,
As every child can tell,
The House of Peers throughout the
war

Did nothing in particular,
And did it very well;
Yet Britain set the world ablaze
In good King George's glorious days.

CHO.

Yes, Britain set, etc.

And while the House of Peers with-
holds

Its legislative hand,
And noble statesmen do not itch
To interfere with matters which
They do not understand,

As bright will shine Great Britain's
rays

As in King George's glorious days.

CHO.

As bright will shine, etc.

[*Exeunt Chorus of PEERS. Manent LORDS MOUNT ARARAT and TOLLER, and FAIRIES.*]

LELIA. [*who has been much attracted by the PEERS during the song.*] Charming persons, are they not?

CELIA. Distinctly. For self-contained dignity, combined with airy condescension, give me a British representative peer!

LD. TOLL. Then, pray, stop this protégé of yours before it's too late. Think of the mischief you're doing!

LELIA. [*crying.*] But we can't stop him now.—[*aside to CELIA.*] Aren't they lovely?—[*aloud.*] Oh, why did you defy us, you great geese?

Duet—LELIA and CELIA

LELIA.

In vain to us you plead—

Don't go;

Your prayers we do not heed—

Don't go.

It's true we sigh,

But don't suppose

A tearful eye

Forgiveness shows;

Oh, no!

We're very cross indeed—

Don't go!

ALL.

It's true they sigh, etc.

CELIA.

Your disrespectful sneers—

Don't go!

Call forth indignant tears—

Don't go!

You break our laws,

You are our foe:

We cry because

We hate you so—

Oh, no!

You very wicked peers,

Don't go!

FAIRIES

You break our
laws,

You are our
foe:

We cry because

We hate you
so—

Oh, no!

You very wicked
peers,

Don't go!

LORDS MOUNT. and
TOLL.

Our disrespectful
sneers—

Ha! ha!

Call forth indig-
nant tears—

Ha! ha!

If that's the case,
my dears,

We go!

[*Exeunt MOUNT ARARAT and TOLLER. FAIRIES gaze wistfully after them. Enter FAIRY QUEEN.*]

QUEEN. Oh, shame! shame upon you! Is this your fidelity to the laws you are bound to obey? Know ye not that it is death to marry a mortal?

LELIA. Yes; but it's not death to wish to marry a mortal.

FLETA. If it were you'd have to execute us all.

QUEEN. Oh, this is weakness! Subdue it!

CELIA. We know it's weakness, but the weakness is so strong!

LELIA. We are not all as tough as you are.

QUEEN. Tough? Do you suppose that I am insensible to the effect of manly beauty? Look at that man. [*referring to SENTRY.*] A perfect picture!—[*to SENTRY.*] Who are you, sir?

SENTRY. Private Willis, B Company, First Battalion Grenadier Guards.

QUEEN. You're a fine fellow, sir.

SENTRY. I am generally admired.

QUEEN. I can quite understand it.—[*to FAIRIES.*] Now, here is a man whose physical attributes are simply godlike. That man has a most extraordinary effect upon me. If I yielded to a natural impulse I should fall down and worship that man. But I mortify this inclination; I wrestle with it, and it lies beneath my feet. This is how I treat my regard for that man.

Song—FAIRY QUEEN

Oh, foolish fay,
Think you, because
His brave array
My bosom thaws,
I'd disobey
Our fairy laws?
Because I fly
In realms above,
In tendency
To fall in love
Resemble I
The amorous dove?

[*Aside.*]

Oh, amorous dove!
Type of Ovidius Naso!
This heart of mine
Is soft as thine,
Although I dare not say so.

CHO.

Oh, amorous dove, etc.

On fire that glows
With heat intense
I turn the hose
Of common sense,
And out it goes
At small expense.
We must maintain
Our fairy law;
That is the main
On which to draw;
In that we gain
A Captain Shaw,
Oh, Captain Shaw!
Type of true love kept under!
Could thy brigade
With cold cascade
Quench my great love, I wonder?

CHO.

Oh, Captain Shaw! etc.

[*Exeunt FAIRIES sorrowfully, headed by FAIRY QUEEN.*]

[*Enter PHYLLIS.*]

PHYL. [*half crying.*] I can't think why I'm not in better spirits. I'm engaged to two noblemen at once. That ought to be enough to make any girl happy; but I'm miserable. Don't suppose it's because I care for Strephon, for I hate him! No girl would care

for a man who goes about with a mother considerably younger than himself.

[*Enter LORD MOUNT ARARAT.*]

LD. MOUNT. Phyllis! my own!

PHYL. Don't! How dare you? But perhaps you are one of the noblemen I'm engaged to?

LD. MOUNT. I'm one of them.

PHYL. Oh! But how came you to have a peerage?

LD. MOUNT. It's a prize for being born first.

PHYL. Oh, I see—a kind of Derby cup.

LD. MOUNT. Not at all. I'm of a very old and distinguished family.

PHYL. And you're proud of your race? Of course you are; you won it. But why are people made peers?

LD. MOUNT. The principle is not easy to explain. I'll give you an example.

Song—MOUNT ARARAT

De Belville was regarded as the Crichton of his age;
His tragedies were reckoned much too thoughtful for the stage;
His poems held a noble rank, although it's very true
That, being very proper, they were read by very few;
He was a famous painter, too, and shone upon the line,
And even Mr. Ruskin came and worshipped at his shrine;
But, alas! the school he followed was heroically high,
The kind of art men rave about, but very seldom buy;
And ev'rybody said,
"How can he be repaid—
This very great, this very good, this very gifted man?"
But nobody could hit upon a practicable plan.

He was a great inventor, and discovered, all alone,
A plan for making everybody's fortune but his own;

For in business an inventor's little better than a fool,
And my highly-gifted friend was no exception to the rule.

His poems—people read 'em in the six-penny Reviews;

His pictures—they engraved 'em in the *Illustrated News*;

His inventions—they perhaps might have enriched him by degrees,

But all his little income went in Patent-Office fees.

So everybody said,

"How can he be repaid—

This very great, this very good, this very learned man?"

But nobody could hit upon a practicable plan.

At last the point was given up in absolute despair,

When a distant cousin died, and he became a millionaire,

With a county seat in Parliament and a moor or two of grouse,

And a taste for making inconvenient speeches in the House.

Then Government conferred on him the highest of rewards:

They took him from the Commons and they put him in the Lords.

And who so fit to sit in it—deny it if you can—

As this very great, this very good, and very gifted man?

Though I'm more than half afraid

That it sometimes may be said

That we never should have revelled in this source of proper pride,

However great his merits, if his cousin hadn't died.

[Enter LORD TOLLOLLER, L.]

LD. TOLL. Phyllis! my darling!

[Embraces her.]

PHYL. Here's the other! Well, have you settled which it's to be?

LD. TOLL. Not altogether; it's a difficult position. It would be hardly delicate to toss up. On the whole, we would rather leave it to you.

PHYL. How can it possibly concern me? You are both earls, and you

are both rich, and you are both plain.

LD. MOUNT. So we are. At least I am.

LD. TOLL. So am I.

LD. MOUNT. No, no!

LD. TOLL. Oh, I am indeed very plain.

LD. MOUNT. Well! well! perhaps you are.

PHYL. There's really nothing to choose between you. If one of you would forego his title and distribute his estates among his Irish tenantry, why, then I should see a reason for accepting the other.

[PHYLLIS retires up.]

LD. MOUNT. Tolloller, are you prepared to make this sacrifice?

LD. TOLL. No!

LD. MOUNT. Not even to oblige a lady?

LD. TOLL. No!

LD. MOUNT. Then the only question is, Which of us shall give way to the other? Perhaps, on the whole, she would be happier with me? I don't know; I may be wrong.

LD. TOLL. No, I don't know that you are. I really think that she would. But the painful part of the thing is, that if you rob me of the girl of my heart, one of us must perish.

LD. MOUNT. Again the question arises, Which shall it be? Do you feel inclined to make this sacrifice?

LD. TOLL. No!

LD. MOUNT. Not even to oblige a gentleman?

LD. TOLL. Impossible! The Tollollers have invariably destroyed their successful rivals. It's a family tradition that I have sworn to respect.

LD. MOUNT. I see. Did you swear it before a commissioner?

LD. TOLL. I did, on affidavit.

LD. MOUNT. Then I don't see how you can help yourself.

LD. TOLL. It's a painful position, for I have a strong regard for you, George.

[Shake hands.]

LD. MOUNT. [much affected.] My dear Thomas!

LD. TOLL. You are very dear to me, George. We were boys together—at least *I* was. If I were to destroy you, my existence would be hopelessly embittered.

LD. MOUNT. Then, my dear Thomas, you must not do it. I say it again and again: if it will have this effect on you, you must not do it. No, no! If one of us is to destroy the other, let it be me.

LD. TOLL. No, no!

LD. MOUNT. Ah, yes! By our boyish friendship I implore you.

[*Shake hands.*]

LD. TOLL. [*much moved.*] Well! well! be it so. But no, no! I cannot consent to an act which would crush you with unavailing remorse.

LD. MOUNT. But it would not do so. I should be very sad at first—oh! who would not be?—but it would wear off. I like you very much, [*shake hands*] but not, perhaps, as much as you like me.

LD. TOLL. George, you're a noble fellow, but that telltale tear betrays you. No, George, you are very fond of me, and I cannot consent to give you a week's uneasiness on my account.

LD. MOUNT. But, dear Thomas; it would not last a week. Remember, you lead the House of Lords; on your demise I shall take your place. Oh, Thomas! it would not last a day!

LD. TOLL. It's very kind and thoughtful of you to look at it in that light, but there's no disguising it, George—we're in a very awkward position.

PHYL. [*coming down.*] Now, I do hope you're not going to fight about me, because it really isn't worth while.

LD. TOLL. I don't believe it is.

LD. MOUNT. Nor I. The sacred ties of friendship are paramount. No consideration shall induce me to raise my hand against Thomas.

LD. TOLL. And in my eyes the life of George is more sacred than love itself.

Quartette—PHYLLIS, LORD TOLLOLLER,
LORD MOUNT. and SENTRY

LD. TOLL.

Tho' p'raps I may incur your blame,
The things are few I wouldn't do
In Friendship's name.

LD. MOUNT.

And I may say I feel the same;
Not even Love should rank above
True Friendship's name.

PHYL.

Then free me, pray; be mine the
shame;
Forget your craze and go your
ways,
In Friendship's name!

ALL.

Oh, many a man in Friendship's
name
Has yielded fortune, rank, and fame,
But no one yet in the world so wide
Has yielded up a promised bride.
Accept, O Friendship, all the same,
Our sacrifice to thy dear name.

[*After Quartette, exeunt PHYLLIS
and LORDS TOLLOLLER and
MOUNT ARARAT.*]

[*Enter LORD CHANCELLOR, very miserable.*]

Recitative

Love, unrequited, robs me of my rest;
Love, hopeless love, my ardent soul
encumbers;
Love, nightmare-like, lies heavy on my
breast,
And weaves itself into my midnight
slumbers.

Song—LORD CHANCELLOR

When you're lying awake with a dismal
headache, and repose is
tabooed by anxiety,
I conceive you may use any language
you choose to indulge in without
impropriety;
For your brain is on fire—the bed-
clothes conspire of usual slumber
to plunder you:
First your counterpane goes and un-
covers your toes, and your sheet
slips demurely from under you;

Then the blanketing tickles—you feel like mixed pickles, so terribly sharp is the pricking,

And you're hot and you're cross, and you tumble and toss till there's nothing 'twixt you and the tick-ing;

Then your bedclothes all creep to the ground in a heap, and you pick 'em all up in a tangle;

Next your pillow resigns and politely declines to remain at its usual angle.

Well, you get some repose in the form of a doze, with hot eyeballs and head ever aching,

But your slumbering teems with such horrible dreams that you'd very much better be waking;

For you dream you are crossing the Channel, and tossing like mad in a steamer from Harwich;

Which is something between a large bathing-machine and a very small second-class carriage;

And you're giving a treat (penny ice and cold meat) to a party of friends and relations—

They're a ravenous horde, and they all come on board at Sloane Square and South Kensington stations;

And bound on that journey you find your attorney (who started that morning from Devon);

He's a bit undersized, and you don't feel surprised when he tells you he's only eleven.

Well, you're driving like mad with this singular lad (by-the-bye, the ship's now a four-wheeler),

And you're playing round games, and he calls you bad names when you tell him that "Ties pay the dealer";

But this you can't stand, so you throw up your hand, and you find you're as cold as an icicle

In your shirt and your socks (the black silk with gold clocks), crossing Salisbury Plain on a bicycle;

And he and the crew are on bicycles too—which they have somehow or other invested in—

And he's telling the tars all the particulars of a company he's interested in:

It's a scheme of devices to get at low prices all goods from cough-mixtures to cables

(Which tickles the sailors) by treating retailers as though they were all vegetables.

You get a good spademan to plant a small tradesman (first take off his boots with a boot-tree),

And his legs will take root and his fingers will shoot, and they'll blossom and spread like a fruit tree.

From the greengrocer tree you get grapes and green pea, cauliflower, pineapples, and cranberries,

While the pastry-cook plant cherry brandy will grant, apple puffs, and three corners, and banberries.

The shares are a penny, and ever so many are taken by Rothschild and Baring;

And just a few are allotted to you, you awake with a shudder despairing.

You're a regular wreck, with a crick in your neck; and no wonder you snore, for your head's on the floor, and you're needles and pins from your soles to your shins; and your flesh is a-creep, for your left leg's asleep; and you've cramps in your toes, and a fly on your nose, and some fluff in your lung, and a feverish tongue, and a thirst that's intense, and a general sense that you haven't been sleeping in clover;

But the darkness has passed, and it's daylight at last, and the night has been long—ditto, ditto, my song—and thank Goodness they're both of them over!

[During the last lines LORDS MOUNT ARARAT and TOLLOLLER have entered. They gaze sympathetically upon the LORD

CHANCELLOR's distress. At the end of his song they come forward.]

LD. MOUNT. I am much distressed to see your lordship in this condition.

LD. CHAN. Ah, my lords, it is seldom that a Lord Chancellor has reason to envy the position of another, but I am free to confess that I would rather be two earls engaged to Phyllis than any other half-dozen noblemen upon the face of the globe.

LD. TOLL. [without enthusiasm.] Yes. In a way, it's an enviable position.

LD. MOUNT. Oh, yes—no doubt most enviable. At the same time, seeing you thus, we naturally say to ourselves, "This is very sad. His lordship is constitutionally as blithe as a bird—he trills upon the bench like a thing of song and gladness. His series of judgments in F sharp, given *andante* in six-eight time, are among the most remarkable effects ever produced in a court of Chancery. He is, perhaps, the only living instance of a judge whose decrees have received the honor of a double encore. How can we bring ourselves to do that which will deprive the court of Chancery of one of its most attractive features?"

LD. CHAN. I feel the force of your remarks, but I cannot make up my mind to apply to myself again. I am here in a double capacity. Firstly, as a Lord Chancellor entrusted with the guardianship of this charming girl; and, secondly, as a suitor for her hand. In my latter capacity I am overawed by my dignity in my former capacity; I hesitate to approach myself—it unnerves me.

LD. TOLL. It's a difficult position. This is what it is to have two capacities. Let us be thankful that we are persons of no capacity whatever.

LD. MOUNT. But take courage! Remember, you are a very just and kindly old gentleman, and you need have no hesitation in approaching yourself, so that you do so respectfully and with a proper show of deference.

LD. CHAN. Do you really think so? Well, I will nerve myself to another effort, and if that fails I resign myself to my fate.

Trio—LORD CHANCELLOR, MOUNT ARARAT, and TOLLoller

LD. MOUNT.

If you go in

You're sure to win—

Yours will be the charming maidie;

Be your law

The ancient saw,

"Faint heart never won fair lady."

ALL.

Never, never, never, never—

Faint heart never won fair lady.

Every journey has an end;

When at the worst affairs will mend;

Dark the dawn when day is nigh;

Hustle your horse and don't say die.

LD. TOLL.

He who shies

At such a prize

Is not worth a maravedi;

Be so kind

To bear in mind,

"Faint heart never won fair lady."

ALL.

Never, never, never, never—

Faint heart never won fair lady.

While the sun shines make your hay;

Where a will is, there's a way;

Beard the lion in his lair;

None but the brave deserve the fair.

LD. CHAN.

I'll take heart

And make a start,

Though I fear the prospect's shady;

Much I'd spend

To gain my end—

"Faint heart never won fair lady."

ALL.

Never, never, never, never—

Faint heart never won fair lady.

Nothing venture, nothing win;

Blood is thick, but water's thin;

In for a penny, in for a pound;
It's love that makes the world go round.

[*Dance, and exeunt arm-in-arm together.*]

[*Enter STREPHON.*]

Recitative

My bill has now been read a second time;

His ready vote no member now refuses;

In verity I wield a power sublime,
And one that I can turn to mighty uses.

What joy to carry, in the very teeth
Of Ministry, Cross-Bench, and Opposition,

Some rather urgent measures, quite beneath

The ken of patriot and politician!

Song—STREPHON

Fold your flapping wings,
Soaring legislature!
Stoop to little things—
Stoop to human nature!
Never need to roam,
Members patriotic;
Let's begin at home—
Crime is no exotic.
Bitter is your bane,
Terrible your trials,
Dingy Drury Lane!
Soapless Seven Dials!

Take a tipsy lout
Gathered from the gutter,
Hustle him about,
Strap him to a shutter;
What am I but he,
Washed at hours stated,
Fed on filagree,
Taught and tutivated?
He's a mark of scorn;
I might be another
If I had been born
Of a tipsy mother.

Take a wretched thief
Through the city sneaking
Pocket-handkerchief
Ever, ever seeking;

What is he but I
Robbed of all my chances,
Picking pockets by
Force of circumstances?
I might be as bad—
As unlucky, rather—
If I'd only had
Fagin for a father.

[*Enter PHYLLIS.*]

PHYL. [*starting.*] Strephon!

STREPH. [*starting.*] Phyllis! But I suppose I should say, "My Lady." I have not yet been informed which title your ladyship has pleased to elect.

PHYL. I haven't quite decided. You see, I have no mother to advise me.

STREPH. No; I have.

PHYL. Yes, a young mother.

STREPH. Not very—a couple of centuries or so.

PHYL. Oh, she wears well.

STREPH. She does; she's a fairy.

PHYL. I beg your pardon—a what?

STREPH. Oh, I've no longer any reason to conceal the fact—she's a fairy.

PHYL. A fairy! Well, but—that would account for a good many things. Then I suppose you're a fairy?

STREPH. I'm half a fairy.

PHYL. Which half?

STREPH. The upper half—down to the waistcoat.

PHYL. Dear me! [*prodding him with her fingers.*] There is nothing to show it. But why didn't you tell me this before?

STREPH. I thought you would take a dislike to me. But as it's all off, you may as well know the truth—I'm only half a mortal.

PHYL. [*crying.*] But I'd rather have half a mortal I do love than half a dozen I don't.

STREPH. Oh, I think not. Go to your half dozen.

PHYL. [*crying.*] It's only two, and I hate 'em! Please forgive me.

STREPH. I don't think I ought to. Besides, all sorts of difficulties will arise. You know my grandmother looks quite as young as my mother. So do all my aunts.

PHYL. I quite understand. When-

ever I see you kissing a very young lady I shall know it's an elderly relative.

STREPH. You will? Then, Phyllis, I think we shall be very happy.

[*Embracing her.*]

PHYL. We won't wait long before we marry; we might change our minds.

STREPH. Yes—we'll get married first.

PHYL. And change our minds afterwards.

STREPH. Yes, that's the usual course.

Duet—STREPHON and PHYLLIS

STREPH.

If we're weak enough to tarry

Ere we marry,

You and I,

Of the feeling I inspire

You may tire

By and by;

For peers with flowing coffers

Press their offers;

That is why

I think we will not tarry

Ere we marry,

You and I.

PHYL.

If we're weak enough to tarry.

Ere we marry

You and I,

With a more attractive maiden,

Jewel-laden,

You may fly.

If by chance we should be parted,

Broken-hearted,

I should die:

That is why we will not tarry

Ere we marry,

You and I.

PHYL. But does your mother know you're—— I mean is she aware of our engagement?

[*Enter IOLANTHE.*]

Io. She is, and thus she welcomes her daughter-in-law. [*Kisses her.*]

PHYL. She kisses just like other people! But the Lord Chancellor?

STREPH. I had forgotten him.—

Mother, none can resist your fairy eloquence. You will go to him and plead for us?

Io. [*aside.*] Go to him?—[*aloud.*] No, no! impossible!

STREPH. But our happiness, our very lives, depend upon our obtaining his consent.

PHYL. Oh, madam, you cannot refuse to do this?

Io. You know not what you ask! The Lord Chancellor is my husband!

STREPH. and PHYL. Your husband?

Io. My husband and your father!

[*STREPHON overcome.*]

PHYL. Then our course is plain. On his learning that Strephon is his son, all objections to our marriage will be at once removed.

Io. Nay, he must never know. He believes me to have died childless; and, dearly as I love him, I am bound, under penalty of death, not to undeceive him. But see, he comes! Quick! my veil! [*Retires up.*]

[*Enter LORD CHANCELLOR. IOLANTHE retires with STREPHON and PHYLLIS.*]

LD. CHAN. Victory! victory! Success has crowned my efforts, and I may consider myself engaged to Phyllis. At first I wouldn't hear of it; it was out of the question. But I took heart. I pointed out to myself that I was no stranger to myself—in point of fact, I had been personally acquainted with myself for some years. This had its effect. I admitted that I had watched my professional advancement with considerable interest, and I handsomely added that I yielded to no one in admiration for my private and professional virtues. This was a great point gained. I then endeavored to work upon my feelings. Conceive my joy when I distinctly perceived a tear glistening in my own eye! Eventually, after a severe struggle with myself, I reluctantly, most reluctantly, consented.

[*IOLANTHE comes down, STREPHON and PHYLLIS going off.*]

But whom have we here?

Recitative—IOLANTHE

My lord, a suppliant at your feet I kneel;

Oh, listen to a mother's fond appeal!
Hear me to-night; I come in urgent need.

'Tis for my son, young Strephon, that I plead.

Ballad—IOLANTHE

He loves! If in the bygone years
Thine eyes have ever shed

Tears—bitter, unavailing tears—
For one untimely dead;

If in the eventide of life
Sad thoughts of her arise,—

Then let the memory of thy wife
Plead for my boy; he dies!

He dies! If, fondly laid aside
In some old cabinet,

Memorials of thy long-dead bride
Lie dearly treasured yet,

Then let her hallowed bridal dress,
Her little dainty gloves,

Her withered flowers, her faded tress,
Plead for my boy; he loves!

[*The LORD CHANCELLOR is moved
by this appeal. After a pause—*]

LD. CHAN.

It may not be, for so the Fates decide:

Learn thou that Phyllis is my promised bride!

Io. [*in horror.*]

Thy bride? no! no!

LD. CHAN.

It shall be so.

Those who would separate us, woe betide!

Io.

My doom thy lips have spoken—
I plead in vain.

CHORUS OF FAIRIES. [*without.*]

Forbear! forbear!

Io.

A vow already broken
I break again.

CHORUS OF FAIRIES. [*without.*]

Forbear! forbear!

Io.

For him—for her—for thee,
I yield my life!

Behold; it may not be—
I am thy wife!

CHORUS OF FAIRIES. [*without.*]

Aiaiah! aiaiah! willaloo!

LD. CHAN. [*recognising her.*]

Iolanthe! thou livest?

Io.

Ay,

I live! Now let me die!

[*Enter FAIRY QUEEN and FAIRIES.
IOLANTHE kneels to her.*]

QUEEN.

Once more thy vows are broken:
Thou thyself thy doom hast spoken.

CHORUS OF FAIRIES.

Aiaiah! aiaiah!

Willahalah! willaloo!

Laloiah! laloiah!

Willahalah! willaloo!

QUEEN.

Bow thy head to destiny:

Death's thy doom, and thou shalt die!

CHORUS OF FAIRIES.

Aiaiah! aiaiah! etc.

[*The Peers and STREPHON enter.*

The QUEEN raises her spear.

LORD CHANCELLOR and STREPHON implore her mercy, LELIA and CELIA rush forward.]

LELIA. Hold! If Iolanthe must die, so must we all, for as she has sinned, so have we.

QUEEN. What?

[*Peers and FAIRIES kneel to her—LORD MOUNT ARARAT with LELIA; LORD TOLLOLLER with CELIA.*]

CELIA. We are all fairy duchesses, marchionesses, countesses, viscountesses and baronesses.

LD. MOUNT. It's our fault; they couldn't help themselves.

QUEEN. It seems they *have* helped themselves, and pretty freely too!—
[*after a pause.*] You have all incurred death, but I can't slaughter the whole

company. And yet [*unfolding a scroll*] the law is clear: Every fairy must die who marries a mortal!

LD. CHAN. Allow me, as an old equity draughtsman, to make a suggestion. The subtleties of the legal mind are equal to the emergency. The thing is really quite simple; the insertion of a single word will do it. Let it stand that every fairy shall die who *don't* marry a mortal, and there you are, out of your difficulty at once!

QUEEN. We like your humour. Very well. [*altering the MS. in pencil.*]—Private Willis!

SENTRY. [*coming forward.*] Ma'am!

QUEEN. To save my life it is necessary that I marry at once. How should you like to be a fairy Guardsman?

SENTRY. Well, ma'am, I don't think much of the British soldier who wouldn't ill-convenience himself to save a female in distress.

QUEEN. You are a brave fellow. You're a fairy from this moment. [*wings spring from SENTRY's shoulders.*]—And you, my lords, how say you? Will you join our ranks?

[*FAIRIES kneel to Peers, and implore them to do so.*]

LD. MOUNT. [*to TOLLOLLER.*] Well, now that the peers are to be recruited entirely from persons of intelligence, I really don't see what use *we* are down here.

LD. TOLL. None, whatever.

QUEEN. Good! [*wings spring from the shoulders of Peers.*] Then away we go to Fairyland!

FINALE

PHYL.

Soon as we may
Off and away,
We will start our journey airy;
Happy are we,
As you can see;
Every one is now a fairy.

PHYLLIS, IOLANTHE, and QUEEN

Tho', as a general rule, we know
Two strings go to every bow,
Make up your mind that grief 'twill
bring
If you've two beaux to every string.

CHO.

Tho', as a general rule, etc.

LD. CHAN.

Up in the sky
Ever so high,
Pleasures come in endless series;
Let us arrange
Pleasant exchange—
House of Peers for House of Peris.

Trio—LORD TOLLOLLER, LORD MOUNT
ARARAT, and LORD CHANCELLOR

Up in the air sky high,
Far from wards in Chancery,
He will be surely happier, far,
For he's such a susceptible Chan-
cellor.

CHO.—Up in the air, etc.

End of Opera

CHAPTER IX

IBSEN AND THE CONTEMPORARY DRAMA (1879-1926)

I. CONTEMPORARY DRAMA IN GENERAL

The contemporary period differs in many ways from other great dramatic epochs. The most notable difference is that the contemporary movement is international: it is not limited to any one country, like Greece in the time of Pericles, England in the age of Elizabeth, or France under Louis XIV. Since 1879 important plays have come from Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Russia, Germany, Austria, Italy, Belgium, France, Spain, England, Ireland, and the United States. The theater of today is on its mechanical side so thoroughly standardized that a play written in one country can be readily staged in any other. The international influence of a modern dramatist from little Norway has affected every country in the western world. When Ibsen published *Hedda Gabler* in 1890, editions were called for almost simultaneously in Christiania, Stockholm, Copenhagen, Leningrad, Moscow, Berlin, Leipzig, London, and New York.

In mechanical equipment the contemporary theater surpasses anything ever dreamed of by Shakespeare or Molière. In lights, properties, and painted scenery the Greek and Elizabethan theaters were, by present-day standards, woefully deficient. Any small town little theater can now secure effects that nobody thought possible a century ago. In fact, contemporary drama has become to a certain extent the slave of its material riches. The result has been a lessening of the importance of the play. The contemporary audience knows the name of the leading actor, but it often does not know the name of the playwright.

In recent years the theater, like everything else, has shown a marked tendency toward specialization. Theatrical exhibitions run to types, such as musical comedies, melodramas, revues, and one-act plays. There are special types of theaters designed for grand opera, ballet, vaudeville, and moving pictures. The motion picture is a recent offshoot from the regular drama. Its audience is the largest in the world, but no one seems to know just what to make of it or what future to forecast. Few, however, fear now that the motion picture will drive the regular drama out of existence.

This splitting off from the regular drama of special types of theatrical exhibitions is in a sense only the logical result of earlier tendencies. In *The Old Drama and the New* William Archer advanced the thesis that the drama, by sloughing off such elements as music, dancing, and verse, has at last become "a pure and logical art-form." The drama, he argued, has rid itself of extrinsic, non-dramatic elements.

Before we proceed to a discussion of contemporary dramatists, we shall briefly note some of the other factors in the present-day theater which in large measure explain the differences between plays of our time and those of the earlier periods.

We have suggested that one characteristic of the modern drama is its high degree of organization and specialization. The owner of the theater is not usually the manager; the manager is not usually his own producer; the producer

rarely acts; and the playwright is now almost never an actor. Even the actors are highly specialized; and there is a bewildering array of stage-hands, carpenters, electricians, and mechanical experts. Sometimes one man owns or controls a number of theaters. There are regular circuits in the smaller cities, and syndicates in New York control the plays which they put on. The little theater movement—to be discussed more fully in the latter part of this chapter—represents a very natural revolt against the commercialization and standardization of a favorite amusement and a fine art.

Even the routine of getting a play accepted and produced is nowadays quite elaborate. Managers employ play-readers to go over the manuscripts which are sent in, to reject those which are impossible and to prepare written reports on those that seem promising. There are play-placing bureaus which for a commission undertake to place plays with leading managers. There are even play-doctors whose business it is to adapt the accepted plays to the requirements of the stage. The business of producing is itself elaborate and expensive. Actors must be obtained by advertising or by consulting files containing names and records; the day of the stock company is practically over. Time and expense and the labor of many hands are involved in assembling the necessary properties and painted scenery and, finally, in advertising the play. There is too much "red tape" and not enough opportunity for intelligent experiment. Sometimes the playwright hardly recognizes his own play when it is put on the stage. The effect of all this, as we have suggested, is to reduce the importance of both play and playwright. Time and again enormous expense has been lavished upon intrinsically worthless plays.

Since the middle of the nineteenth century, there have come about important changes in the stage itself. The proscenium has been cut back until only a narrow strip is left between the curtain and the footlights, and—except in vaudeville—this is rarely used. Modern methods of lighting are responsible for what we call the picture-frame stage, into which the actor fits as into a picture. The scenic effect of the play is immensely more effective, for the visual illusion is practically perfect; but in a sense the actor is now removed from the audience. The natural tendency upon the picture-frame stage is for the producer to over-emphasize other things than the play itself.

The picture-frame stage is probably responsible for the practical disuse of the soliloquy and the aside and perhaps for the use of colloquial prose instead of verse and high-sounding rhetoric. It partly explains the tendency of modern drama toward realism rather than romance. The difficulty of changing the elaborate scene and the expense involved in having many sets of scenery and properties have militated against the making of frequent changes of scene within the play. As we shall note again in the case of Ibsen, there has been a tendency to return to the three unities of time, place, and action.

The actor's lot is both better and worse than in former periods. Here again we see the inevitable tendency toward specialization. Producers are too much given to type-casting. It is obviously unfair to keep a talented young actor playing one type of rôle, perpetually making the same gestures and droning the same tone of voice that first attracted attention. The long runs which many contemporary plays have do not give the young actor a chance, which he might have had with the old stock companies, to play a wide variety of parts in a single season. The "star" system results too often in a performance in which one or two parts are well played while the others are mediocre or worse. In a sense, it is true that most great plays have star parts—*Antigone*, *Hamlet*, and *Tartuffe*, for example—but the Greeks and Elizabethans did not advertise the "star" rather than the play, as modern producers habitually do. On the other hand, our actors are highly honored. Their economic and social status has been

greatly improved. Acting as a profession now appeals to many who begin as amateurs, including persons of wealth and social position. Our American actors are, as a rule, better than the plays they appear in.

The theater in modern times—perhaps generally since the time of the Greeks—has been primarily a business venture; but in the late nineteenth century it became commercialized as never before. It now takes a small fortune to put on a play in New York or London. Shrewd business men, wishing to employ sound commercial methods, have often taken too narrow a view of what the public wants. The taste of the public cannot be comprised in a formula which includes only such elements as the spectacular, the salacious, and the sentimental. The public is eminently human, and no formula ever quite covers all its interests. Besides, formulas make no allowance for changes of taste, and the taste of the public is continually changing.

If we compare the modern audience with that of Shakespeare or Molière, the first thing that attracts our attention is the tremendous number of people who go to the theater today. The increased diffusion of wealth and the rudiments of education has brought into the theater thousands whose fathers and mothers never dreamed of going there. The percentage of women who go has increased even more. The intelligent and the cultured are now, to a great degree, lost in the multitude. Under these circumstances it is difficult to maintain high standards. Fortunately for the regular drama, the moving pictures attract many of the least intelligent but by no means all. It is impossible to have great plays until there are audiences capable of recognizing their merit. Winthrop Ames, one of the best of American producers, said in 1916:

If you want an intellectually aristocratic drama, you must have an intellectually aristocratic audience. . . . The trouble with the drama now, and for several years in the past, is that it is dominated by a great, new, eager, childlike, tasteless, honest, crude general public; and, as for blaming anybody—well, it's pretty poor fun blaming a great primal force like gravitation or democracy. We're probably just going through a disagreeable but necessary period of gestation; and when the potentialities of our audiences have had time to develop, they may develop with it an American drama that—like the drama of Elizabethan England—will give us a place in the sun.

Contemporary drama represents a breaking away from theatrical conventions. This revolt is somewhat similar to the revolt of present-day poets and novelists from the diction, technique, and general outlook of their predecessors. Older conventions like the soliloquy and the aside have been practically abandoned. The clever "well-made play" of Scribe and Sardou has been ruled out of court; and the better playwrights have shown an extraordinary eagerness for innovation and experiment. The reaction against the old has affected content as well as form. The author of the "well-made play," we are told, had nothing of importance to say; his psychology was bad; his ideas were third-rate; and he underestimated the intelligence of his audience. Serious dramatists of today care little for the sentimental, and they usually avoid the conventional happy ending. They have rebelled against the Victorian reticence, which is now plainly named prudishness or hypocrisy. Plays like Ibsen's *Ghosts*, Pinero's *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray*, and Brieux's *Damaged Goods* frankly treat social problems that were taboo among the Victorians.

One striking aspect of contemporary drama is the re-wedding of drama to literature. The major English poets of the Victorian age either did not write plays or wrote them upon the obsolete Shakespearean model; hence their plays are closet-dramas. In recent years plays of both literary and dramatic importance have been written in English by such poets as Yeats, Masfield, and Moody and by important novelists like Barrie, Bennett, and Galsworthy. Other dramatists, like Synge, Shaw, and O'Neill, whose reputations rest on their plays,

have contributed greatly toward raising the literary level of the drama. The fact that people now read plays as they read any other form of literature is significant of a new appreciation of the literary importance of the drama. Another significant fact is that colleges now offer courses in contemporary drama and often in play-writing and play-production as well.

II. HENRIK IBSEN

Although contemporary literature represents a revolt against nineteenth century traditions, its forerunners themselves belonged to the nineteenth century. As contemporary poetry goes back to Walt Whitman and contemporary prose fiction to Thomas Hardy, so contemporary drama goes back to Henrik Ibsen, whose life overlaps a little at each end the long reign (1837-1901) of Queen Victoria. In contemporary drama Ibsen occupies an unusual position in that he is not only the chief forerunner but also the most significant single figure in the whole movement. It is as though Shakespeare had preceded Marlowe and Greene. The story of Ibsen's life is the story of contemporary drama down to about 1890.

Henrik Ibsen (1828-1906) was born, in the same year as Tolstoy and Meredith, in the little town of Skien in southern Norway. He grew up a quiet, rather unsocial boy. His family were poor; and, when less than sixteen, he was taken from school and apprenticed to an apothecary in the dull village of Grimstad. Here he spent the next five years. Edmund Gosse has suggested that Ibsen's dislike of his Grimstad environment is reflected in his plays. "Through the whole series of his satiric dramas," says Gosse, "we see the little narrow-minded borough, with its ridiculous officials, its pinched and hypocritical social order, its intolerable laws and ordinances." Grimstad must in some ways have resembled the village of Gopher Prairie in Sinclair Lewis's *Main Street*.

In 1850, at the age of twenty-one, Ibsen, like Samuel Johnson, with a few dollars and a tragedy in his pocket, set out for the capital, Christiania, to seek his fortune. In the next year, through the influence of Ole Bull, the violinist, he was given a position as director of the new National Theater in Bergen, at a salary of less than three hundred and fifty dollars a year. The Bergen theater, however, sent him, with some of his actors, on a visit to Copenhagen and Dresden for new ideas. During his stay of six years in Bergen, Ibsen wrote, as a part of his contract, a play each year. One of these, *The Warriors at Helgeland* (1861), published in 1858, is a very interesting study of life in the age of the Vikings. In 1857 he returned to Christiania as director of the Norwegian Theater.

In 1864, having received a small poet's pension from the Norwegian parliament, Ibsen went to Rome. "Here at last," he wrote to Björnson, "there is blessed peace." Italy, the Mecca of poets and artists, helped Ibsen to find himself, as it had helped Goethe and many other poets. In 1866 he published his fine poetic drama, *Brand*. In these years Ibsen's fame was growing, but it was the fame of a poet rather than that of a dramatist. *Peer Gynt* (1867), another fine dramatic poem, was denounced by some Norwegian critics because it violated the established rules. Ibsen's sturdy self-reliance is admirably shown in his defence of himself: "My book is poetry; and if it is not, then it shall be. The Norwegian conception of what poetry is, shall be made to fit my book."

After four years in Italy, Ibsen took up his residence in Dresden, where he lived several years. In 1873 he published the long and ambitious *Emperor and Galilean*, which was written in prose. Ibsen's letter to Gosse explaining

his reasons for abandoning verse has been quoted in the introductory chapter. Here we may note that about the same time certain English and American writers, like Arnold, Morris, and Lowell, were turning from poetry to prose. In 1877 Ibsen published *The Pillars of Society*, the first and weakest of his social dramas. Björnson, in *The Editor* (1874) and *A Bankruptcy* (1875), had already broken ground in this new field, where Ibsen's most significant work was to be done.

A Doll's House (1880), published in 1879, provoked a storm. Probably no play of greater historical importance was ever written. The year 1879 may well be taken as marking the real beginning of contemporary drama. *A Doll's House* bears a general resemblance to George Meredith's well-known novel, *The Egoist*, also published in 1879. Ibsen was not an advocate of woman's active participation in political and social problems, but he did believe that marriage should rest upon the basis of truth, freedom, and intellectual companionship. Up to the middle of the last act, the plot of the play resembles that of the "well-made play." At the point where Krogstad returns the forged note, the audience expected the traditional happy ending and were dumfounded when Nora and Helmer, instead of rushing into one another's arms, sat down to an impassioned discussion of their relations to one another. This dramatic debate, to which Ibsen had carefully led up, was a great innovation. The conclusion, in which Nora, for the sake of an idea, gives up her home, her husband, and her children, was tremendously effective. Here was something new; the drama of ideas was born. Even in Germany, however, producers did not always dare to allow this dramatic close to stand unaltered. One resourceful producer, it is said, without adding or altering a line, gave the lie to all that Ibsen had tried to drive home to his audience by having Nora return immediately and silently remove her wraps.

Ibsen's next play, *Ghosts*, published in 1881, grew out of *A Doll's House*. In this tragedy Ibsen says in effect to his critics: "You maintain that a wife has no right to leave her husband under any circumstances. Well, here is Mrs. Alving, who remained with her dissolute husband until he died. Look at the consequences!" On still another side *Ghosts* goes back to *A Doll's House*. The theme of hereditary disease, by which an innocent son suffers for the sins of a guilty father, was lightly touched upon in Dr. Rank in the earlier play; but in *Ghosts* it is one of the major motives of the play. *Ghosts* was received with shudders of horror that can now hardly be understood, although even yet audiences are shocked by the suggestion that a mother may have the right to take the life of her imbecile son. If we except Ibsen's other plays, *Ghosts* is the finest example of contemporary tragedy. It strangely resembles the Greek tragedy in its dramatic power, its compression, and its observance of the unities. James G. Huxner once aptly referred to Oswald Alving as "Orestes in a smoking jacket."

In Ibsen's plays we find a new type of tragedy, which we may pause to consider for a moment. Contemporary tragedies are rarely pure examples of the type, for dramatists no longer write tragedies as such. The forces behind contemporary tragedy are not fate or destiny, as with the Greeks, but heredity and environment. Modern science has brought about a new conception of life and forced the dramatist to phrase its tragedy in new terms. Both heredity and environment are responsible for the tragic conclusion of Hauptmann's *Before Dawn*; and intolerable economic conditions are the tragic force in his powerful play, *The Weavers*. In *The Father* Strindberg tries to show that the moral code of the wife brings about the insanity of the husband. In O'Neill's *The Hairy Ape* the tragic force is, in part at least, the social and economic barrier between classes. In Synge's *Riders to the Sea* the tragic motive is the

sea itself. The Shakespearean tragedy of character, however, still continues, although here, too, heredity and environment play a great part. Character is responsible for the tragic conclusion of O'Neill's *The Emperor Jones*, but how different the play is from *Macbeth*, another study of character degeneration! The tragic heroes of modern plays are not kings or noblemen, as with Racine, Shakespeare, and Sophocles; "Yank" in *The Hairy Ape* is a stoker and Brutus Jones, the "Emperor," is an ex-Pullman porter.

Ibsen's *An Enemy of the People* (1882), which followed *Ghosts*, grew out of the reception given to that play. A physician is proclaimed a public enemy because he dares to point out the fact that the water-supply of a health and pleasure resort is full of poisonous bacteria. The play is half-allegory; and the underlying suggestion is that the Norwegians, building their lives upon social impurities, have branded Ibsen as an enemy of the people for daring to tell them the truth. The Norwegian audiences failed to see the point, however, and the play proved popular on the stage.

Since space forbids discussion of Ibsen's many plays, we shall omit the later ones to consider briefly his contribution to the drama. Both his ideas and his technique greatly influenced his successors. It is difficult to reduce Ibsen's ideas to a formula. In *The Wild Duck* (1884, 1885), a play which puzzled many of Ibsen's followers, he warns against blindly following any formula, even his own. Nevertheless the closing speech of *The Pillars of Society* contains a suggestive summary: "The spirit of truth and the spirit of freedom—they are the pillars of society." To this we may add two sentences from Dr. Stockmann's famous speech in the fourth act of *An Enemy of the People*: "The majority never has right on its side." "The most dangerous enemy of truth and freedom is the compact majority—yes, the damned compact liberal majority." Ibsen's villains, if we may so term them, are the ultra-conventional. Torvald Helmer, Pastor Manders, and Peter Stockmann are cowardly, conventional persons who dare not defy social conventions or public opinion. Ibsen gives his unreserved admiration only to men of strong will like Dr. Stockmann and Brand.

Ibsen's technique is admirably adapted to the presentation of his ideas. He manipulates characters and plot so as to stimulate thought. Not that he ever tries definitely to prove anything, for the stage is no place for social panaceas. He abandons verse for simple and direct prose. He gives up unnatural stage conventions like the aside and the soliloquy. Instead of presenting a long and complicated story in selected scenes, like the Elizabethans, Ibsen usually confines his attention to the closing episodes of a fairly simple story. His interest, like Hawthorne's, is not so much in the deed as in its consequences. In other words, he is a psychologist. His interest in character is quite as marked as his interest in ideas. Of *Hedda Gabler* (1890, 1891), one of his strongest plays, he said: "It was not my purpose to deal with what people call problems in this play. What I chiefly tried to do was to paint human beings, human emotions, and human fate against a background of some of the conditions and laws of society as it exists today."

Both Ibsen's ideas and his technique fitted in with the trend of events, and for that reason his influence has been very great. Often he merely anticipated changes that were sure to appear sooner or later. His plays have been least influential perhaps in France and the United States. The French, having an excellent theatrical tradition of their own, found his plays less remarkable; and America did not have an intelligent organized audience ready for Ibsen. In Germany and England, however, the independent theaters used his plays to fight their battles with the commercial theaters. One notes the influence of Ibsen's conception of love and marriage in numerous plays, such as Hauptmann's

Before Dawn, Sudermann's *The Vale of Content*, Pinero's *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray*, and Moody's *The Great Divide*.

III. OTHER SCANDINAVIAN DRAMATISTS

Ibsen's great reputation has quite overshadowed that of his friend and rival, Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson (1832-1910), who pioneered in the field of social drama before Ibsen made it his own. Bjørnson's poems and stories are perhaps more important than his plays, but a number of the latter have considerable merit. *A Gauntlet* (1883) is a powerful indictment of the double standard, and the two plays published under the title of *Beyond Human Power* (1883 and 1895) reveal dramatic force and grasp of ideas.

The Swedish dramatist, August Strindberg (1849-1912), is one of the most eccentric figures in contemporary literature. He was at one time an agnostic, at another time a spiritualist; in one period he idealized love and marriage, later he became a misogynist. Perhaps his most powerful play is *The Father* (1887), a bitter indictment of women, who in the war of the sexes, he tries to show, defeat men because their code allows them to employ deception. The play is a sort of counterblast to Ibsen, to whom Strindberg once referred as "the famous Norwegian bluestocking." *The Spook Sonata* (1907) was recently successfully revived by the Provincetown Players. The dramatic movement now known as expressionism, so obvious in recent plays, had its beginnings some twenty or thirty years ago in Strindberg and not, as is often stated, in Germany.

IV. GERHART HAUPTMANN

The best known dramatist of modern Germany is Gerhart Hauptmann (1862-), a far more significant figure than the clever and popular Sudermann. Hauptmann is, in fact, the leading writer of modern Germany, and he has written important poems and novels as well as plays. He received the Nobel prize for literature in 1912. His *Before Dawn* (1889), a very remarkable play for a beginner, reveals clearly the influence of Ibsen's ideas and technique. Two divergent literary ideals often appear to be struggling in Hauptmann's mind. He is now the poet, romantic and idealistic; and now he is the out and out realist, more extreme than Ibsen. Naturalism, to use the modern term for realism, has gone no farther than in *The Weavers* (1893). In this tragedy there are no outstanding characters and practically no plot; instead, we have a moving panorama of employers and striking workmen. It is an attempt to put on the stage a cross-section of life in all its vivid reality. In *The Sunken Bell* (1896), however, Hauptmann is following the German tradition of poetic drama set years before by Goethe and Schiller. *The Assumption of Hannele* (1893) is not only one of Hauptmann's best plays; it happily combines the poet and the realist.

V. RUSSIAN DRAMATISTS

Russia, like the United States, is a recent accession to world literature. The work of the great trio of novelists—Turgenieff, Dostoevsky, Tolstoy—has somewhat overshadowed a considerable achievement in the drama. The Russian plays reveal many of the same qualities for which Russian fiction is famous: a remarkable insight into the motives of men, a faithfulness in representing life as the writer sees it, and a certain indifference to conventions of

form. Leo Tolstoy (1828-1910), whose *War and Peace* and *Anna Karénina* are two of the world's greatest novels, wrote a number of plays, of which the most powerful are *The Power of Darkness* (1886) and *The Man Who Was Dead* (1912).

The plays of Anton Tchekoff (1860-1904) have attracted more international attention than those of any other Russian dramatist. *The Boor* (1888) is an excellent one-act comedy. *The Cherry Orchard* (1904), his best long play, is an admirable example of naturalism in drama. The characters are remarkably well drawn; and the setting, with the orchard in the background, is very effective. Like other naturalistic dramatists, Tchekoff avoids the obvious and well-worn devices of the stage, such as emphatic "curtains" and dramatic climaxes. He shows us life as he sees it, commonplace as well as tragic and beautiful; and he succeeds in interesting us in ordinary people doing ordinary things. Often his characters talk when we feel they should be doing something, but nevertheless the speeches in which they reveal themselves hold our interest. In Gorky's *Varenka Olessova* one of the characters describes, rather unsympathetically, the typical Russian character as found in fiction and drama: "The Russian hero is always silly and stupid; he is always sick of something; always thinking of something that cannot be understood; and is himself so miserable, so m-i-serable! He will think, think; then talk; then he will go and make a declaration of love; and after that he thinks, and thinks again till he marries. . . . And when he is married, he talks all sorts of nonsense to his wife—and then abandons her."

Maxim Gorky (1868-) spent his youth in such varied occupations as shoemaker's apprentice, surveying, gardening, working in a bakery, and serving as cook on snipboard. When he began to write novels, short stories, and plays, he gave much attention to characters drawn from the lower classes—especially peasants and the poorer people of the cities. The best known of his plays is *The Lower Depths* (1902). Gorky's primary purpose seems to be to show us the thoughts of his people; the action consists largely of disjointed incidents.

Leonid Andreyeff's (1871-1919) plays often deal with men as mere puppets, pawns in a game played by supernatural forces. His characters, even more than those of other Russian writers, are continually questioning the meaning of life. Among his best plays are *King Hunger* (1907) and *Anathema* (1909).

Michael Artzibasheff (1878-), like all the other Russian dramatists whom we have mentioned, writes novels as well as plays. He has been greatly influenced by Tolstoy and, to a lesser degree, by Dostoevsky and Tchekoff. Artzibasheff's early ambition, like that of many other writers, was to become a great painter. *Jealousy* (1913), one of his early plays, emphasizes the erotic element which is found also in his once popular novel, *Sanine*. His *War* (1916) is the most notable dramatic study of war written since the beginning of the World War in 1914.

VI. FRENCH DRAMATISTS

Modern France differs from all other countries in having a long and well defined dramatic tradition. French drama has maintained its connection with literature almost uninterruptedly since the time of Louis XIV. The Théâtre Français, which is subsidized by the government, has helped to keep alive the tradition of the French classic drama. It is no rare thing on the Parisian stage to see the plays of Racine and Molière produced. Ibsen's plays, as we have noted, had less to offer the French than any other people. In some respects the younger Dumas had anticipated Ibsen in the drama of ideas. The Ibsen influence, which helped the French to free themselves from the Scribe

formula, is best seen in the plays of Eugène Brieux (1858-) and Paul Hervieu (1857-1915).

The outstanding dramatist of modern France, however, is Edmond Rostand (1868-1918), who owes nothing to Ibsen. Rostand ably continues the tradition of French poetic drama, which goes back to Corneille. Rostand's most obvious indebtedness, however, is to Shakespeare, whose influence on recent English drama is negligible. The duel in which Cyrano composes a ballade seems reminiscent of Mercutio's description of Tybalt's fighting in *Romeo and Juliet*. *The Romancers* (1894) is a charming poetic comedy with many echoes of the same Shakespearean play. *The Far-away Princess* (1895) is a delicate and charming bit of poetic fantasy. *The Eaglet* (1900), which deals with the little son of the great Napoleon, resembles *Hamlet* in some respects. The ambitious *Chanticleer* (1910) was something of a failure although the use of fowls as *dramatis personæ* was a notable experiment.

Rostand's masterpiece is *Cyrano de Bergerac* (1897). This poetic drama, the hero of which is an almost forgotten French author, was written for and around the famous actor Coquelin. The play has wit, charm, poetry, and theatrical effectiveness; but it lacks consistency of characterization, even in the case of the hero. Each act is very effective in itself, but the five acts do not make a consistent, well-proportioned whole. Nevertheless *Cyrano* is one of the finest of all contemporary plays and is not unworthy of the tradition of Corneille, whose heroic plays it sometimes recalls. The fundamental idea of the play is excellent. Cyrano is a poet, a soldier, an accomplished duelist, a romantic lover; but he is hideously ugly, for his nose is so large as to seem a personal deformity. On the Elizabethan stage Cyrano might have been the butt of ridicule, but he appeals to the sentiment that lies back of the story of the ugly duckling. Those of us who are not beautiful or handsome are likely to endow ourselves, by way of compensation, with other attractive qualities. On the stage the sharp contrast between extreme ugliness and greatness of soul is startlingly effective. Cyrano, however, is, for all his charm, a bundle of fine points for the actor rather than a living man like Hamlet or Falstaff. And yet on the stage the play is so effective that we are swept off our feet and our critical faculties are paralyzed. *Cyrano*, if not a great tragedy, is, in spite of its faults, one of the best of contemporary plays.

Maurice Maeterlinck (1862-), the Belgian dramatist, since he writes in French and has lived much in Paris, belongs in a sense to French drama. His early plays, though written in prose, are remarkable for their poetic atmosphere and their use of poetic symbolism. They contain little action, for Maeterlinck was at that time an advocate of what he called "static drama." In *The Treasure of the Humble* he wrote: "I have grown to believe that an old man, seated in his arm-chair, waiting patiently, with his lamp beside him. . . —I have grown to believe that he, motionless as he is, does yet live in reality a deeper, more human, and more universal life than the lover who strangles his mistress, the captain who conquers in battle, or the 'husband who avenges his honor.'" The best of the plays of Maeterlinck's first period are *The Blind* (1890); *The Intruder* (1890); *Pélléas and Mélisande* (1892), a variation upon the Paolo and Francesca story; and *Sister Beatrice* (1901). *The Intruder* is one of the most striking plays of atmosphere and situation of modern times. It is a good example of the "static drama." There is no struggle, only the realization of a mood—an attempt to catch subconscious or half-realized emotions. One feels, however, the approach of some dreadful doom, as in Sophocles' *Œdipus the King*. Maeterlinck's use of suggestion and suspense reminds one often of Edgar Allan Poe, whose work—along with that of two other Americans, Emerson and Whitman—has influenced him to a considerable degree.

With *Sister Beatrice* (1901) Maeterlinck's earlier period came to an end. In *Monna Vanna* (1902) we find him attempting something more like the conventional type of play. With regard to the "static drama," Maeterlinck had come to feel that, as he expresses it: "There are no words so noble and admirable, but they will soon weary us if they leave the situation unchanged, if they lead to no action, bring about no decisive conflict, or hasten no definite solution." In *Monna Vanna*, a very successful stage play, we find a definite conflict—the old struggle between love and duty. In *Monna Vanna* herself we find a full-length portrait of a real woman—not a shadowy figure like those of *The Intruder* and *Pélléas and Mélisande*. Among the best of Maeterlinck's later, more realistic, plays are *The Blue Bird* (1908) and *Mary Magdalene* (1910). *The Blue Bird*, though not Maeterlinck's greatest play, is certainly his best known. The symbolism here is of a more obvious kind than that of the earlier plays. The blue bird, for example, is a symbol of happiness.

VII. AUSTRIAN, SPANISH, AND ITALIAN DRAMATISTS

The Austrian dramatist, Arthur Schnitzler (1862-), since he writes in German, might well have been classed with the German dramatists. His plays are largely concerned with the psychology of love and marriage. The best of the Spanish dramatists are José Echegaray (1832-1916) and Jacinto Benavente (1866-). Echegaray's best known play is *The Grand Galeoto* (1881); Benavente's is perhaps *The Bonds of Interest* (1907).

Luigi Pirandello (1867-), whose *Six Characters in Search of an Author* (1921) is one of the most interesting of recent experimental plays, has made some impression on other countries outside of his native Italy; but the great Italian dramatist of modern times is Gabriele D'Annunzio (1863-). D'Annunzio's poems and war record are well known—not to mention the episode of Fiume, which he long held in defiance of the terms of the Treaty of Versailles. D'Annunzio is beyond question the greatest figure in contemporary Italian letters. His best known plays are *Gioconda* (1898), reminiscent of the Mona Lisa; *Francesca da Rimini* (1901), which had its source in the most famous episode in Dante's *Inferno*; and *The Daughter of Jorio* (1904). The great actress, Eleonora Duse, played the leading rôles in many of D'Annunzio's plays. His plays are full of lyric fire. D'Annunzio is an esthete; his is a religion of beauty. One of the characters in *Gioconda* says, "So much sorrow will not have been suffered in vain—so much evil will not have been useless—if one thing so beautiful remains over to be added to the ornament of life." The subject-matter of D'Annunzio's plays is often unpleasant, "decadent." The theme of *The Dead City* (1898) is incest. In general, D'Annunzio's themes recall those of the French *Décadents* and of one or two late Elizabethan dramatists, like John Ford, the author of *The Broken Heart*.

VIII. ENGLISH DRAMATISTS

Nineteenth century English drama, as we saw in the preceding chapter, is something of a disappointment until we reach the closing decade of the century. Many of the popular plays were adaptations or translations from the French. In those days, as William Archer put it, the British playwright's "stock-in-trade consisted of a French dictionary and a defective sense of literary property."

The plays of Oscar Wilde (1856?-1900) show little trace of the Ibsen influ-

ence, but they possess many of the earmarks of the clever Scribe play. In plot they often touch melodrama or farce, but they are redeemed from mediocrity by good technique and by an extraordinary brilliance of dialogue. Wilde's plays have all the superficial cleverness that we find in Congreve and Sheridan. They are the first successful acting plays of literary merit to be written in England since the time of Goldsmith and Sheridan. Wilde accomplished what neither Wordsworth, Coleridge, Tennyson, nor Browning was able to do—write a play of literary merit that would hold the stage. The plot of his *Lady Windermere's Fan* (1892) is made up of popular ingredients, suspense, surprise, humor, and sentiment. The clever, melodramatic plot is built around the sentiment that no mother ever sinks so low as to cease to love her child. Neither the mother nor the daughter is convincing, but the situation makes a strong appeal to any audience. The play belongs to literature mainly by virtue of its style. Wilde's plays are rich mines of clever paradoxes, often of no dramatic value, such as: "I can resist everything except temptation." "The youth of America is their oldest tradition." "Men marry because they are tired; women because they are curious. Both are disappointed." Three of Wilde's other comedies deserve mention: *A Woman of No Importance* (1893), *The Importance of Being Earnest* (1895), and *An Ideal Husband* (1895).

Henry Arthur Jones (1851-), like Pinero, was a successful playwright before Ibsen's influence and other forces had brought about a revival in English drama, but his earlier plays are forgotten. His later plays have a more important content than Wilde's, but they lack his distinction of style. *Dolly Reforming Herself* (1908) and *Mary Goes First* (1913), however, rise nearer the level of high comedy than any other modern English plays except those of Bernard Shaw. Many of Jones's other plays, like *The Liars* (1897) and *Mrs. Dane's Defence* (1900), show considerable power and uniform excellence of workmanship. His one-act play, *The Goal*, is one of the best short plays in contemporary British drama; but although the play was written in 1897, it was not performed until 1914—and then in New York.

The later plays of Sir Arthur Wing Pinero (1855-) also show the moulding influence of Ibsen. No living dramatist is a better master of technique than Pinero. His first act is always a model of exposition and complication, and his dialogue is natural, simple, and effective. He is not, however, a powerful original thinker like Ibsen or Shaw, and his characters are sometimes not convincing. Even so fine a play as *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray* (1893) has some shortcomings as a discussion of the marriage in which a woman with a past is concerned. The explanation of Tanqueray's determination to marry Paula is not quite convincing; and the *dénouement*, instead of being the logical result of the situation, is brought about by a coincidence. The play, however, has great dramatic power. Among Pinero's most nearly perfect plays—though not his most popular—are *The Thunderbolt* (1908) and *Mid-channel* (1909). *The Thunderbolt* is an admirable study of English provincial life which reminds one of Arnold Bennett's *Clayhanger* trilogy and Sinclair Lewis's *Main Street*.

In George Bernard Shaw (1856-), the most recent winner of the Nobel prize in literature, we have an Irish dramatist whose career is intimately associated with the Ibsen influence in England. After following varied interests—art, music, fiction, Fabian Socialism—Shaw published in 1891 *The Quintessence of Ibsenism*, and in the next year produced his first play, *Widowers' Houses*. Ibsen had shown him the advantages of the drama as a means of disseminating his ideas. Those ideas, however, are not generally derived from Ibsen, as a reader of his book on Ibsen might infer. Shaw has himself admitted that his plots are not particularly novel; they contain numerous surprises that remind one of the Scribe play. In *Arms and the Man* (1894), for example, he secures some of his

cleverest effects by deliberately making his leading characters inconsistent. Shaw, however, adapts his plots to a very original content. In both ideas and style he is highly individual. In his plays a new type of comedy—the Shavian—makes its appearance. Before Shaw began to write, satire had always been the weapon which the conservative used to combat the innovations of the radical and the faddist. Aristophanes, for instance, had attacked Euripides as an upstart who presumed to violate the sacred traditions of Greek tragedy. Shaw, however, has captured the enemy's guns and turned them upon his adversaries. He attacks conventional ideas of morality and manners with keen intelligence and incisive wit. His comedies are comedies of ideas, and their chief purpose is to stimulate thinking. They bear no resemblance to the romantic comedies of Shakespeare, and they resemble the plays of Sheridan and Wilde only in their brilliant dialogue. Shaw's prolix speeches and long, argumentative prefaces have caused some readers to imagine that his plays do not act well. This is an error. Although his plays do not appeal strongly to the average spectator, who resents being asked to think, especially in the theater, his plays do have remarkable acting qualities. Indeed, Shaw seems, since the deaths of Ibsen and Synge, the greatest living dramatist. His ideas are more significant than his technique. Not even Ibsen was as keen a thinker as Shaw, who has worked out for himself a more definite and consistent philosophy than any of his predecessors in the drama. This is no place for a discussion of Shaw's view of life. His various prefaces and two of the plays, *Man and Superman* (1903, 1905) and *Back to Methusaleh* (1921, 1922), give a brilliant and coherent statement of his philosophy. His best plays perhaps are *Candida* (1897), *Major Barbara* (1905), *Androcles and the Lion* (1913), *Pygmalion* (1913), and *Saint Joan* (1923).

Shaw, unlike Ibsen, has had no great influence upon other dramatists. The Shavian influence, however, is seen in the plays of Harley Granville-Barker (1877-), one of the best contemporary English producers. *The Madras House* (1910) is probably the best English example of naturalism. Its chief defect is that it contains material for three or four separate plays.

John Galsworthy (1867-) has been successful as both novelist and dramatist, though probably his masterpiece is the long novel, *The Forsyte Saga*. His plays are thoroughgoing realistic studies of ideas and problems. They are very symmetrical in structure; each is a perfect logical demonstration of a thesis. Their chief defect is that they are too perfect demonstrations; they lack life. The characters are not wholly convincing; they are too much like symbols in a mathematical problem. Galsworthy's plays, however, are uniformly well written, and they succeed upon the stage. Perhaps the best of them are *Strife* (1909), *Justice* (1910), and *Loyalties* (1922). *Strife*, the story of a strike, is an excellent example of Galsworthy's method. Each side is represented by a strong leader of the uncompromising type. The poverty of the striking workmen is effectively contrasted with the luxury of the capitalists. In the end the two strong leaders are overthrown; others seize control and make terms, which turn out to be exactly the same as were proposed to both sides before the strike began. The moral is the futility of strife.

Sir James Matthew Barrie (1860-) began as a novelist. Every one knows *The Little Minister* and *Sentimental Tommy*. Barrie owes nothing to Ibsen and has little interest in ideas or social problems. The one play in which he attacks a large problem, *The Admirable Crichton* (1903), is a brilliant comedy but a quite unsatisfactory treatment of the particular problem. Imagine, for instance, how differently Shaw would have handled the last act. Barrie's plays are very successful on the stage. The most popular of them all is *Peter Pan* (1904). Their strength lies in their charm and in their excellent workmanship.

They are full of Barrie's whimsical view of life, and they contain remarkable touches of fantasy, poetry, and humor. For a parallel to *Dear Brutus* (1917), one must go back to *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Barrie's appeal is to the love of humor and of sentiment. We are continually asked to respond to some sentiment suggested by mothers, orphan children, poor girls who want to be rich, and little boys who never grow up. Barrie's one-act plays are excellent. *The Twelve-pound Look* (1910) is probably his most perfect play, and it is perhaps the finest short comedy written in contemporary times.

Later English plays reveal a further breaking away from the Ibsen influence. *Milestones* (1912) by Arnold Bennett (1867-) and Edward Knoblock (1874-), shows a marked departure from the close compactness of Ibsen's plays. The three acts of the play are laid in 1860, 1885, and 1912; and important characters are introduced in every act.

John Drinkwater's (1882-) historical plays remind one of Shakespeare's history plays. He divides his plays into scenes but not into acts. Drinkwater believes that it is better to employ historical characters rather than persons of the playwright's own invention. He uses Cromwell or Lincoln or Mary Stuart as the embodiment of the human type desired rather than create a fictitious character of which the audience knows nothing in advance. The hero of his *Abraham Lincoln* (1918) is a fine example of the wise and just statesman. Into this play, which was written during the World War, Drinkwater has put his own ideal of a statesman and his own solution of the problem of war. The various attitudes assumed toward the Civil War by pacifists and fire-eaters all find their parallel in the War with Germany.

John Masefield (1876-), one of the greatest living poets, has written some notable novels and plays. *The Tragedy of Nan* (1908) has had greater success upon the stage than his other plays. It is natural that Masefield, being primarily a poet, should be especially interested in the creation of a new type of poetic drama. In the preface to *The Tragedy of Nan*, which is in prose, he gives his views on the subject of poetic drama.

The poetic impulse of the Renaissance is now spent. The poetic drama, the fruit of that impulse, is now dead. Until a new poetic impulse gathers, playwrights trying for beauty must try to create new forms in which beauty and the high things of the soul may pass from the stage to the mind. Our playwrights have all the powers except that power of exultation which comes from a delighted brooding on excessive, terrible things. That power is seldom granted to man; twice or thrice to a race perhaps, not oftener. But it seems to me that every effort, however humble, towards the achieving of that power helps the genius of the race to obtain it, though the obtaining may be fifty years after the strivers are dead.

IX. IRISH DRAMATISTS

Ireland has produced a number of important dramatists, but few of them belong to a history of the Irish stage. Farquhar, Steele, Goldsmith, and Sheridan—like Wilde and Shaw—wrote for the London theaters. Their plays have little to do with Irish life. The real Irish drama had its beginnings in very recent times, and its leading figures are William Butler Yeats and John Millington Synge.

The Irish dramatic movement is only a part of a remarkable Irish literary revival; and this literary renaissance is, in turn, only a part of a national reawakening, which not long ago reached its culmination in the formation of the Irish Free State. Irishmen have tried to revive or develop a distinctive Irish culture apart from that of England. They have tried to revive the old Irish language, Gaelic, which had nearly died out. Irishmen have re-studied their

national history, explored their rich background of legend, and have observed Irish life with fresh eyes, endeavoring to get away from the conventional Irish figures of drama and fiction.

The central figure of the Irish movement is William Butler Yeats (1865-). Yeats has written fine plays and excellent essays, but his chief claim to fame rests upon his poems. He is probably the greatest lyric poet of our generation. In 1923 he received the Nobel prize for literature. Although his plays have been successfully acted, he has not the sure instinct for the stage which Synge possessed. His poetic plays, however, are by far the best modern examples of verse drama in English. His best plays are perhaps *The Land of Heart's Desire* (1894), *The Countess Cathleen* (1899), *Cathleen ni Houlihan* (1902), and *The Shadowy Waters* (1904). In his more recent *Four Plays for Dancers*, published in 1921, he has experimented with masked figures in imitation of the Japanese Noh plays.

The Irish Literary Theater was opened in 1899, but later Yeats and others withdrew and founded the Irish National Theater Society for the purpose of performing Irish rather than foreign plays. Eventually the Society found a home in the Abbey Theater through the generosity of Miss Horniman, an Englishwoman. Yeats had met with all kinds of difficulties: money was hard to raise; many of those interested were difficult to please; some were frankly hostile. Eventually, however, the Society was able to purchase the Abbey Theater, which is now the home of the Irish national drama.

One of Yeats's aims has been to revive the lost Elizabethan delight in the beauty of poetic speech. Among his amateur actors, he was fortunate enough to find two brothers by the name of Fay, who had great talent for acting. These Irish actors were able, under Yeats's direction, to do what no English or American actors of the time could do—read verse as it should be read. Without such actors, Yeats's poetic plays would have been well-nigh impossible to stage successfully.

The greatest of the Irish dramatists, and one of the three or four greatest dramatists of our time, is John Millington Synge (1871-1909). After leaving Trinity College, Dublin, Synge wandered around for a time and finally settled in Paris, hoping to master French literature and become its interpreter to English-speaking people. Here Yeats met him in 1898 and said to him: "Give up Paris; you will never create anything by reading Racine, and Arthur Symons will always be a better critic of French literature. Go to the Aran Islands. Live there as if you were one of the people themselves; express a life that has never found expression." Synge was sensible enough to take Yeats's advice. He went to the Aran Islands off the west coast of Ireland and studied the character, habits, and language of the peasants. *Riders to the Sea* (1904), the scene of which is laid in the Aran Islands, is one result of this visit. This is probably Synge's best play and almost certainly the greatest of all one-act plays. All of Synge's plays are written in a beautiful rhythmic prose, which is modeled on the speech of Irish peasants. Synge's flexible and poetic prose seems the inevitable medium for his plays, but it is not, we are told, a literal transcription of Irish peasant speech. Synge's other plays, all exceedingly good, are *In the Shadow of the Glen* (1903), *The Well of the Saints* (1905), *The Playboy of the Western World* (1907), *The Tinker's Wedding* (1909), and *Deirdre of the Sorrows* (1910). *The Playboy*, which is one of the best of British comedies, aroused a storm of protest. The Irish were so sensitive to criticism that they could not bear the dispassionate analysis of the Irish character to which Synge subjected it in this amazing comedy. Synge's plays are marvels of good workmanship and of dramatic power. Though all his plays have a strong flavor of the soil, the theme is always of universal significance. The characters are

remarkably real, and the action and the setting are full of latent poetry. Synge's early death deprived the world of one of the most promising dramatists who ever lived.

Lord Dunsany (1872-), like the other Irish dramatists, excels in the one-act play. Some of his plays, it is interesting to note, had their first production in New York in Stuart Walker's Portmanteau (later the Punch and Judy) Theater. Dunsany's plays are written in a beautiful rhythmical prose style which recalls Homer and the Bible. Dunsany is, in fact, like Synge, a prose poet of high order. The second part of a sentence from Dunsany's introduction to the poems of Francis Ledwidge reveals the elements of which his atmosphere is composed: "Of pure poetry there are two kinds, that which mirrors the beauty of the world in which our bodies are, and that which builds the more mysterious kingdoms where geography ends and fairyland begins, with gods and heroes at war, and the sirens singing still, and Alph going down to the darkness from Xanadu." Dunsany, as his *Book of Wonder* clearly shows, has the powers of a myth-maker. His plays are a strange and beautiful compound of such elements as Oriental romance, Homeric myth, modern poetic symbolism, and something individual of Dunsany's own. The leading motive of his plays is fear or, to use his favorite word, doom. His best plays are *The Gods of the Mountain* (1911), *King Argimenes and the Unknown Warrior* (1911), *A Night at an Inn* (1916), and *The Laughter of the Gods* (1919). His long play, *If*, is somewhat disappointing; perhaps the mood which Dunsany desires to create cannot be sustained throughout an entire evening's performance.

X. AMERICAN DRAMATISTS

The beginnings of American drama go back to the eighteenth century. The first American play was Thomas Godfrey's (1736-1763) *The Prince of Parthia*, produced in Philadelphia in 1767. Although America produced some noted actors like Jefferson and Edwin Booth, she produced no plays of real literary importance until the twentieth century. New York and two or three other cities, however, have an interesting theatrical history; and some of our earlier plays give a very interesting reflection of our national life and tastes. The Puritan tradition perhaps prevented the New England poets from trying their hands at plays intended for the stage. For a long time there were no cities with sufficient wealth, leisure, and culture to support a drama of the better type. In the absence of an international copyright law before 1891, it was easy to adapt French and English plays; and consequently little encouragement was given to native playwrights. America lacked a cultural capital until after the Civil War when New York finally took over the disputed leadership from Boston and Philadelphia. Even now America has no such center as Paris or London. New York is far from being wholly representative of America, though it is undeniably our theatrical capital. The most interesting of our early plays include Royall Tyler's *The Contrast* (1787), our first comedy and the second play written by an American; Robert Montgomery Bird's *The Broker of Bogota* (1834); George Henry Boker's *Francesca da Rimini* (1855); and *Rip Van Winkle* (1865), a dramatization of Irving's short story by several hands.

Certain earlier playwrights may be regarded as forerunners of the contemporary American drama. Bronson Howard (1842-1908) was something of a pioneer in modern American drama. His most popular—and perhaps his best—play is *Shenandoah* (1888), a Civil War play of adventure, love, and sentiment. His comedy, *Wives* (1879), was adapted from Molière's *École des Femmes* and *École des Maris*. Clyde Fitch (1865-1909) was once considered a dramatist of

importance, but his plays have not held the stage; and they do not have the qualities which would recommend them to the reader. His plays are clever, skilfully contrived, but weak in character and psychology. *The Truth* (1907), a comedy, is perhaps the best. Two of Augustus Thomas's (1859-) plays, *The Witching Hour* (1907) and *As a Man Thinks* (1911), show skilful workmanship and an interest in intellectual themes, but they contain no great characters and have little literary merit.

William Vaughn Moody (1869-1910), a scholar and a poet, was the first to write an American play of real importance. *The Great Divide* (1906) is a study of love and marriage somewhat in the manner of Ibsen in a background that changes from Arizona to Massachusetts. East and West represent a clash in ideals, especially in the mind of Ruth Jordan, who cannot escape her New England upbringing. After eloping with Stephen Ghent, a dissipated rough diamond who reforms, she becomes dissatisfied and returns for a time to her mother's home. The play has unusual dramatic power, and the contrasting scenes in Arizona and Massachusetts effectively set off the contrast between husband and wife. Moody's second and last play, *The Faith Healer* (1909), was not a stage success, though it contains some powerful scenes. Moody died in 1910, just when he might perhaps have written something really great.

Contemporary American drama really begins in 1915 with the little theater movement. By a coincidence that year saw the beginnings of three notable little theater groups: the Neighborhood Players, the Washington Square Players, and the Provincetown Players. They experimented with new types of drama, and they encouraged the writing of original plays. The Washington Square Players were succeeded by the Theater Guild, which has produced many important European plays. The Provincetown Players began by making a theater out of an old building on a wharf at Provincetown, Massachusetts. Later they moved to New York. The Provincetown Players discovered two playwrights of considerable importance, Susan Glaspell and Eugene O'Neill.

The extraordinary development of the little theater movement in this country within the past ten or fifteen years is due to several circumstances: in the cities, to a dissatisfaction with the commercial theaters; in the smaller towns, to a dissatisfaction with the poor road shows and to a desire for community expression in the drama; and everywhere, to a desire to see foreign plays of distinction and native plays of better quality. Increased expenses of traveling and transportation had deprived many towns of even the poorer road shows. It was, for them, a choice between the motion picture and an amateur theater. The little theater appealed to the civic pride of many and to a desire to act on the part of others. The little theaters survived the World War, and they have grown steadily ever since. Saylor's *Our American Theatre*, published in 1923, lists over four hundred and fifty little theaters in the United States—and his list is far from complete. The little theater movement has helped to change the drama from a purely commercial venture to something akin to an art. If few important dramatists have been discovered, at least there has been much profitable experimenting. Some of the little theaters have failed because of bad management, social jealousies, or injudicious selection of plays; but some of them have had conspicuous success. In particular, the Dallas Little Theater, which won the Belasco cup for three consecutive years, has, under the able direction of Oliver Hinsdell, shown both a remarkable ability to produce plays and an ability to arouse local interest in the drama. The three one-act plays which the Dallas Little Theater took to New York are all plays dealing with life in the South or Southwest: J. W. Rogers's *Judge Lynch* (1924), Paul Green's *The No 'Count Boy* (1925), and Margaret Larkin's *El Cristo* (1926).

Eugene Gladstone O'Neill (1888-) is the only American playwright who is generally accepted as a great dramatist. He is certainly the best we have yet produced; and, since he is still under forty, his best work is probably yet to be written. The son of an actor, he traveled with his father for a time; went to Princeton for a short while; worked at various positions; prospected for gold in Honduras; read Conrad; shipped for South America; went to Africa; shipped as able seaman on the American line; returned to New York to try his hand at acting, clerking, and newspaper reporting; and, while recovering from tuberculosis in a hospital, began writing plays; went to Harvard for a year (1914-1915) to study under George P. Baker; joined the Provincetown Players; and finally settled down to writing plays. O'Neill's life reminds one of the early years of Masefield, whose experiences have furnished him wonderfully rich material. The modern tendency to specialization has not prevented O'Neill from acquiring the wide acquaintance with life which a dramatist needs. His connection with the Provincetown Players proved the making of him and of them as well.

O'Neill began with short plays, destroying such as did not satisfy him. His book of one-act plays, *The Moon of the Caribbees*, published in 1919, deals with a group of sailors. Although each play is a unit in itself, the various characters reappear throughout the book, as in O. Henry's *Cabbages and Kings*. *Beyond the Horizon* (1920) was his first successful long play. All of O'Neill's plays are remarkably direct and powerful. They show none of the squeamishness of earlier American writers; he is not afraid of the tragic, or even the sordid. His dialect, whether of sailors, stokers, negroes, or educated people, is always natural, straightforward, and expressive. His characters are almost the only successful examples of the developing character to be found in recent plays. *The Hairy Ape* (1922), his own favorite, and *The Emperor Jones* (1920) are admirable studies of character development. O'Neill is the first of our native playwrights to attract marked attention in Europe, where his plays are quickly translated and produced. He is also the first of our dramatists for whom we do not need in some sense to apologize. Laurence Hutton once defined an American play as a play by an American writer on an American theme with American characters. Such a definition would, as Brander Matthews suggests, have ruled out *The Cid*, *Hamlet*, *Julius Cæsar*, and *Phèdre*; but it would include O'Neill's plays. American life has found its first adequate dramatic expression in them.

There are a number of other American playwrights of importance whom we can only mention in passing. Percy MacKaye (1875-), the son of the actor and playwright, Steele MacKaye, has written a number of masques, or pageants, of which the best, *Caliban: A Community Masque* (1916), was produced in New York as part of the Shakespeare Tercentenary celebration. Of MacKaye's regular dramas the best is *The Scarecrow: A Tragedy of the Ludicrous* (1909). Rachel Crothers (1878-), an Illinoian by birth, has written several plays which lack little of attaining real greatness: *He and She*, also called *The Herfords* (1912), *Old Lady 31* (1916), and *Nice People* (1921). Gilbert Emery, an actor as well as a playwright, has written significant plays in *The Hero* (1921) and *Tarnish*. Two American collaborators, George S. Kaufman (1889-) and Marc Connelly, are the authors of several delightful light comedies, *Dulcy* (1921), *To the Ladies!* (1922), and *Merton of the Movies*. Susan Glaspell's (1882-) work has been closely connected with the Provincetown Players both as author and as actress. Her *Trifles* (1917) is one of the best American one-act plays; and so also is *Suppressed Desires* (1917), which she wrote in collaboration with George Cram Cook. The most promising of the younger playwrights is Paul Green (1894-), a North Carolinian, whose collections of one-act plays, *The*

Lord's Will and *Lonesome Road*, present vivid and thought-compelling pictures of the lives of Southern country people, white and black.

XI. CONCLUSION

Many voices have bewailed the passing of the old poetic drama—and there is no doubt that the greatest plays of all time were written in verse. In recent times Ibsen, Yeats, Hauptmann, and Rostand have written notable plays in verse. No American, however, has written an important verse play, although it may be worth noting in passing that the once popular *Everywoman* was written in blank verse. There is no doubt that today the tradition of verse drama is practically dead. And yet poetic drama, properly speaking, is not dead. Nowadays it takes the form of poetic prose. Synge's *Riders to the Sea* and Dunsany's *The Tents of the Arabs*, both in prose, are as poetic in mood as Yeats's *The Land of Heart's Desire*, which is in blank verse. We sometimes forget that much of the poetry in Shakespeare's plays would still exist if he had written them in prose. The whole atmosphere of *Romeo and Juliet* and of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is charged with poetry. Incidentally, two of Shakespeare's most famous poetic passages are in prose: Hamlet's "What is Man?" speech and the sleep-walking scene in *Macbeth*. The one-act play, as we shall note again in the following chapter, especially invites the dramatist to attempt poetic effects.

Nevertheless realism has been the predominant influence in contemporary drama, and the chief merit of contemporary plays is not their poetry or romance but their faithfulness in representing human life, thought, and feeling. Background, dialect, incident, and character have all been close to life. Another remarkable quality of contemporary drama is its singular fertility in ideas; the drama has proved almost as effective a medium for the dissemination of ideas as the novel. Finally, contemporary drama displays an unprecedented variety, which is partly due to the fact that contemporary playwrights represent a dozen separate nations. One important technical contribution of recent times is the one-act play, which calls for discussion in a separate chapter.

William Archer and George P. Baker, both sane and scholarly critics, have expressed the opinion that more good plays have been written in our time than in any preceding period. One may admit this and still maintain that the present is not equal to the age of Elizabeth or of Louis XIV. Contemporary estimates are notably fallacious. Probably Scribe and his contemporaries thought their plays the best ever written; certainly Dryden and Congreve thought their period better than that of Shakespeare. The general level of excellence is perhaps higher in our time than ever before, but we have fewer unmistakable masterpieces. For all the variety, power, and beauty of contemporary drama, we have no dramatist who is quite comparable to Shakespeare, Molière, or Sophocles. Ibsen, Synge, and Shaw are perhaps our three greatest. But Synge's plays are nearly all short, and there are only six of them in all. Shaw's plays are whimsical, verbose, and sometimes undramatic. Ibsen's plays are beginning to seem too didactic. In poetry we unhesitatingly condemn the didactic; why should we be more lenient in the drama? On the whole, however, it seems clear that contemporary drama is quite as important as contemporary poetry and possibly more important than contemporary fiction. The present period will, at any rate, rank as one of the four or five great dramatic epochs of the world.

A DOLL'S HOUSE *

HENRIK IBSEN

Translated by William Archer

CHARACTERS

TORVALD HELMER.

NORA, his wife.

DOCTOR RANK.

MRS. LINDEN.

NILS KROGSTAD.

THE HELMERS' three children.

ANNA, their nurse.

ELLEN, a maidservant.

A PORTER.

The action passes in HELMER's house (a flat) in Christiania.

ACT I

A room, comfortably and tastefully, but not expensively, furnished. In the back, on the right, a door leads to the hall; on the left another door leads to HELMER's study. Between the two doors a pianoforte. In the middle of the left wall a door, and nearer the front a window. Near the window a round table with armchairs and a small sofa. In the right wall, somewhat to the back, a door, and against the same wall, further forward, a porcelain stove; in front of it a couple of armchairs and a rocking-chair. Between the stove and the side-door a small table. Engravings on the walls. A what-not with china and bric-à-brac. A small bookcase filled with handsomely bound books. Carpet. A fire in the stove. It is a winter day. A bell rings in the hall outside. Presently the outer door of the flat is heard to open.

* William Archer's translation of *A Doll's House* is here reprinted by permission of Charles Scribner's Sons.

[NORA enters, humming gayly. She is in outdoor dress, and carries several parcels, which she lays on the right-hand table. She leaves the door into the hall open, and a PORTER is seen outside, carrying a Christmas tree and a basket, which he gives to the Maidservant who has opened the door.]

NORA. Hide the Christmas tree carefully, Ellen; the children must on no account see it before this evening, when it's lighted up. [to the PORTER, taking out her purse.] How much?

PORTER. Fifty öre.

NORA. There is a crown. No keep the change.

[The PORTER thanks her and goes.

NORA shuts the door. She continues smiling in quiet glee as she takes off her outdoor things. Taking from her pocket a bag of macaroons, she eats one or two. Then she goes on tiptoe to her husband's door and listens.]

Yes; he is at home.

[She begins humming again, crossing to the table on the right.]

HELM. [in his room.] Is that my lark twittering there?

NORA. [busy opening some of her parcels.] Yes, it is.

HELM. Is it the squirrel frisking around?

NORA. Yes!

HELM. When did the squirrel get home?

NORA. Just this minute! [hides the bag of macaroons in her pocket and wipes her mouth.] Come here, Torvald, and see what I've been buying.

HELM. Don't interrupt me. [*a little later he opens the door and looks in, pen in hand.*] Buying, did you say? What! All that? Has my little spendthrift been making the money fly again?

NORA. Why, Torvald, surely we can afford to launch out a little now. It's the first Christmas we haven't had to pinch.

HELM. Come, come; we can't afford to squander money.

NORA. Oh, yes, Torvald, do let us squander a little, now—just the least little bit! You know you'll soon be earning heaps of money.

HELM. Yes, from New Year's Day. But there's a whole quarter before my first salary is due.

NORA. Never mind; we can borrow in the meantime.

HELM. Nora! [*he goes up to her and takes her playfully by the ear.*] Still my little featherbrain! Supposing I borrowed a thousand crowns to-day, and you made ducks and drakes of them during Christmas week, and then on New Year's Eve a tile blew off the roof and knocked my brains out.

NORA. [*laying her hand on his mouth.*] Hush! How can you talk so horridly?

HELM. But supposing it were to happen—what then?

NORA. If anything so dreadful happened, it would be all the same to me whether I was in debt or not.

HELM. But what about the creditors?

NORA. They! Who cares for them? They're only strangers.

HELM. Nora, Nora! What a woman you are! But seriously, Nora, you know my principles on these points. No debts! No borrowing! Home life ceases to be free and beautiful as soon as it is founded on borrowing and debt. We two have held out bravely till now, and we are not going to give in at the last.

NORA. [*going to the fireplace*] Very well—as you please, Torvald.

HELM. [*following her.*] Come, come; my little lark mustn't droop her

wings like that. What? Is my squirrel in the sulks? [*takes out his purse.*] Nora, what do you think I have here?

NORA. [*turning round quickly.*] Money!

HELM. There! [*gives her some notes.*] Of course, I know all sorts of things are wanted at Christmas.

NORA. [*counting.*] Ten, twenty, thirty, forty. Oh, thank you, thank you, Torvald! This will go a long way.

HELM. I should hope so.

NORA. Yes, indeed; a long way! But come here, and let me show you all I've been buying. And so cheap! Look, here's a new suit for Ivar, and a little sword. Here are a horse and a trumpet for Bob. And here are a doll and a cradle for Emmy. They're only common; but they're good enough for her to pull to pieces. And dress-stuffs and kerchiefs for the servants. I ought to have got something better for old Anna.

HELM. And what's in that other parcel?

NORA. [*crying out.*] No, Torvald, you're not to see that until this evening!

HELM. Oh! Ah! But now, tell me, you little spendthrift, have you thought of anything for yourself?

NORA. For myself! Oh, I don't want anything.

HELM. Nonsense! Just tell me something sensible you would like to have.

NORA. No, really I don't know of anything—Well, listen, Torvald—

HELM. Well?

NORA. [*playing with his coat-buttons, without looking him in the face.*] If you really want to give me something, you might, you know—you might—

HELM. Well? Out with it!

NORA. [*quickly.*] You might give me money, Torvald. Only just what you think you can spare; then I can buy something with it later on.

HELM. But, Nora—

NORA. Oh, please do, dear Torvald, please do! I should hang the money in lovely gilt paper on the Christmas tree. Wouldn't that be fun?

HELM. What do they call the birds that are always making the money fly?

NORA. Yes, I know—spendthrifts, of course. But please do as I ask you, Torvald. Then I shall have time to think what I want most. Isn't that very sensible, now?

HELM. [*smiling.*] Certainly; that is to say, if you really kept the money I gave you, and really spent it on something for yourself. But it all goes in housekeeping, and for all manner of useless things, and then I have to pay up again.

NORA. But, Torvald—

HELM. Can you deny it, Nora dear? [*he puts his arm round her.*] It's a sweet little lark, but it gets through a lot of money. No one would believe how much it costs a man to keep such a little bird as you.

NORA. For shame! How can you say so? Why, I save as much as ever I can.

HELM. [*laughing.*] Very true—as much as you can—but that's precisely nothing.

NORA. [*hums and smiles with covert glee.*] H'm! If you only knew, Torvald, what expenses we larks and squirrels have.

HELM. You're a strange little being! Just like your father—always on the lookout for all the money you can lay your hands on; but the moment you have it, it seems to slip through your fingers; you never know what becomes of it. Well, one must take you as you are. It's in the blood. Yes, Nora, that sort of thing is hereditary.

NORA. I wish I had inherited many of papa's qualities.

HELM. And I don't wish you anything but just what you are—my own, sweet little song-bird. But I say—it strikes me you look so—so—what shall I call it?—so suspicious to-day—

NORA. Do I?

HELM. You do, indeed. Look me full in the face.

NORA. [*looking at him.*] Well?

HELM. [*threatening with his finger.*] Hasn't the little sweet-tooth been playing pranks to-day?

NORA. No; how can you think such a thing!

HELM. Didn't she just look in at the confectioner's?

NORA. No, Torvald; really—

HELM. Not to sip a little jelly?

NORA. No; certainly not.

HELM. Hasn't she even nibbled a macaroon or two?

NORA. No, Torvald, indeed, indeed!

HELM. Well, well, well; of course I'm only joking.

NORA. [*goes to the table on the right.*] I shouldn't think of doing what you disapprove of.

HELM. No, I'm sure of that; and, besides, you've given me your word—[*going toward her.*] Well, keep your little Christmas secrets to yourself, Nora darling. The Christmas tree will bring them all to light, I dare say.

NORA. Have you remembered to invite Doctor Rank?

HELM. No. But it's not necessary; he'll come as a matter of course. Besides, I shall ask him when he looks in to-day. I've ordered some capital wine. Nora, you can't think how I look forward to this evening.

NORA. And I, too. How the children will enjoy themselves, Torvald!

HELM. Ah, it's glorious to feel that one has an assured position and ample means. Isn't it delightful to think of?

NORA. Oh, it's wonderful!

HELM. Do you remember last Christmas? For three whole weeks beforehand you shut yourself up every evening till long past midnight to make flowers for the Christmas tree, and all sorts of other marvels that were to have astonished us. I was never so bored in my life.

NORA. I didn't bore myself at all.

HELM. [*smiling.*] But it came to little enough in the end, Nora.

NORA. Oh, are you going to tease me about that again? How could I help the cat getting in and pulling it all to pieces?

HELM. To be sure you couldn't, my poor little Nora. You did your best to give us all pleasure, and that's the main

point. But, all the same, it's a good thing the hard times are over.

NORA. Oh, isn't it wonderful?

HELM. Now I needn't sit here boring myself all alone; and you needn't tire your blessed eyes and your delicate little fingers—

NORA. [*clapping her hands.*] No, I needn't, need I, Torvald? Oh, how wonderful it is to think of? [*takes his arm.*] And now I'll tell you how I think we ought to manage, Torvald. As soon as Christmas is over—[*the hall doorbell rings.*] Oh, there's a ring! [*arranging the room.*] That's somebody come to call. How tiresome!

HELM. I'm "not at home" to callers; remember that.

ELLEN. [*in the doorway.*] A lady to see you, ma'am.

NORA. Show her in.

ELLEN. [*to HELMER.*] And the doctor has just come, sir.

HELM. Has he gone into my study?

ELLEN. Yes, sir.

[*HELMER goes into his study.*]

[*ELLEN ushers in MRS. LINDEN, in traveling costume, and goes out, closing the door.*]

MRS. LIND. [*embarrassed and hesitating.*] How do you do, Nora?

NORA. [*doubtfully.*] How do you do?

MRS. LIND. I see you; don't recognize me.

NORA. No, I don't think—oh, yes!—I believe—[*suddenly brightening.*]

What, Christina! Is it really you?

MRS. LIND. Yes; really I!

NORA. Christina! And to think I didn't know you! But how could I—[*more softly.*] How changed you are, Christina!

MRS. LIND. Yes, no doubt. In nine or ten years—

NORA. Is it really so long since we met? Yes, so it is. Oh, the last eight years have been a happy time, I can tell you. And now you have come to town? All that long journey in mid-winter! How brave of you!

MRS. LIND. I arrived by this morning's steamer.

NORA. To have a merry Christmas,

of course. Oh, how delightful! Yes, we *will* have a merry Christmas. Do take your things off. Aren't you frozen? [*helping her.*] There; now we'll sit cozily by the fire. No, you take the armchair; I shall sit in this rocking-chair. [*seizes her hands.*] Yes, now I can see the dear old face again. It was only at the first glance—But you're a little paler, Christina,—and perhaps a little thinner.

MRS. LIND. And much, much older, Nora.

NORA. Yes, perhaps a little older—not much—ever so little. [*she suddenly checks herself; seriously.*] Oh, what a thoughtless wretch I am! Here I sit chattering on, and—Dear, dear Christina, can you forgive me!

MRS. LIND. What do you mean, Nora?

NORA. [*softly.*] Poor Christina! I forgot: you are a widow.

MRS. LIND. Yes; my husband died three years ago.

NORA. I know, I know; I saw it in the papers. Oh, believe me, Christina, I did mean to write to you; but I kept putting it off, and something always came in the way.

MRS. LIND. I can quite understand that, Nora, dear.

NORA. No, Christina; it was horrid of me. Oh, you poor darling! how much you must have gone through!—And he left you nothing?

MRS. LIND. Nothing.

NORA. And no children?

MRS. LIND. None.

NORA. Nothing, nothing at all?

MRS. LIND. Not even a sorrow or a longing to dwell upon.

NORA. [*looking at her incredulously.*] My dear Christina, how is that possible?

MRS. LIND. [*smiling sadly and stroking her hair.*] Oh, it happens so sometimes, Nora.

NORA. So utterly alone! How dreadful that must be! I have three of the loveliest children. I can't show them to you just now; they're out with their nurse. But now you must tell me everything.

MRS. LIND. No, no; I want you to tell me—

NORA. No, you must begin; I won't be egotistical to-day. To-day I'll think only of you. Oh! but I must tell you one thing—perhaps you've heard of our great stroke of fortune?

MRS. LIND. No. What is it?

NORA. Only think! my husband has been made manager of the Joint Stock Bank.

MRS. LIND. Your husband! Oh, how fortunate!

NORA. Yes; isn't it? A lawyer's position is so uncertain, you see, especially when he won't touch any business that's the least bit—shady, as of course Torvald never would; and there I quite agree with him. Oh! You can imagine how glad we are. He is to enter on his new position at the New Year, and then he'll have a large salary, and percentages. In future we shall be able to live quite differently—just as we please, in fact. Oh, Christina, I feel so light-hearted and happy! It's delightful to have lots of money, and no need to worry about things, isn't it?

MRS. LIND. Yes; at any rate, it must be delightful to have what you need.

NORA. No, not only what you need, but heaps of money—heaps!

MRS. LIND. [*smiling.*] Nora, Nora, haven't you learned reason yet? In our schooldays you were a shocking little spendthrift.

NORA. [*quietly smiling.*] Yes; that's what Torvald says I am still. [*holding up her forefinger.*] But "Nora, Nora," is not so silly as you all think. Oh! I haven't had the chance to be much of a spendthrift. We have both had to work.

MRS. LIND. You, too?

NORA. Yes, light fancy work: crochet, and embroidery, and things of that sort; [*carelessly*] and other work too. You know, of course, that Torvald left the Government service when we were married. He had little chance of promotion, and of course he required to make more money. But in the first year after our marriage he overworked

himself terribly. He had to undertake all sorts of extra work, you know, and to slave early and late. He couldn't stand it, and fell dangerously ill. Then the doctors declared he must go to the South.

MRS. LIND. You spent a whole year in Italy, didn't you?

NORA. Yes, we did. It wasn't easy to manage, I can tell you. It was just after Ivar's birth. But of course we had to go. Oh, it was a wonderful, delicious journey! And it saved Torvald's life. But it cost a frightful lot of money, Christina.

MRS. LIND. So I should think.

NORA. Twelve hundred dollars! Four thousand eight hundred crowns! Isn't that a lot of money?

MRS. LIND. How lucky you had the money to spend!

NORA. We got it from father, you must know.

MRS. LIND. Ah, I see. He died just about that time, didn't he?

NORA. Yes, Christina, just then. And only think! I couldn't go and nurse him! I was expecting little Ivar's birth daily; and then I had my poor sick Torvald to attend to. Dear, kind old father! I never saw him again, Christina. Oh! That's the hardest thing I have had to bear since my marriage.

MRS. LIND. I know how fond you were of him. But then you went to Italy?

NORA. Yes; you see, we had the money, and the doctors said we must lose no time. We started a month later.

MRS. LIND. And your husband came back completely cured.

NORA. Sound as a bell.

MRS. LIND. But—the doctor?

NORA. What do you mean?

MRS. LIND. I thought as I came in your servant announced the doctor—

NORA. Oh, yes; Doctor Rank; But he doesn't come professionally. He is our best friend, and never lets a day pass without looking in. No, Torvald hasn't had an hour's illness since that time. And the children are so healthy and well, and so am I. [*jumps up and*

claps her hands.] Oh, Christina, Christina, what a wonderful thing it is to live and to be happy!—Oh but it's really too horrid of me! Here am I talking about nothing but my own concerns. [*seats herself upon a footstool close to CHRISTINA, and lays her arms on her friend's lap.*] Oh, don't be angry with me! Now tell me, is it really true that you didn't love your husband? What made you marry him, then?

MRS. LIND. My mother was still alive, you see, bedridden and helpless; and then I had my two younger brothers to think of. I didn't think it would be right for me to refuse him.

NORA. Perhaps it wouldn't have been. I suppose he was rich then?

MRS. LIND. Very well off, I believe. But his business was uncertain. It fell to pieces at his death, and there was nothing left.

NORA. And then—?

MRS. LIND. Then I had to fight my way by keeping a shop, a little school, anything I could turn my hand to. The last three years have been one long struggle for me. But now it is over, Nora. My poor mother no longer needs me; she is at rest. And the boys are in business, and can look after themselves.

NORA. How free your life must feel!

MRS. LIND. No, Nora; only inexpressibly empty. No one to live for! [*stands up restlessly.*] That's why I could not bear to stay any longer in that out-of-the-way corner. Here it must be easier to find something to take one up—to occupy one's thoughts. If I could only get some settled employment—some office work.

NORA. But, Christina, that's such drudgery, and you look worn out already. It would be ever so much better for you to go to some watering-place and rest.

MRS. LIND. [*going to the window.*] I have no father to give me the money, Nora.

NORA. [*rising.*] Oh, don't be vexed with me.

MRS. LIND. [*going to her.*] My dear Nora, don't you be vexed with me. The

worst of a position like mine is that it makes one so bitter. You have no one to work for; yet you have to be always on the strain. You must live; and so you become selfish. When I heard of the happy change in your fortunes—can you believe it?—I was glad for my own sake more than for yours.

NORA. How do you mean? Ah, I see! You think Torvald can perhaps do something for you.

MRS. LIND. Yes; I thought so.

NORA. And so he shall, Christina. Just you leave it all to me. I shall lead up to it beautifully!—I shall think of some delightful plan to put him in a good humor! Oh, I should so love to help you!

MRS. LIND. How good of you, Nora, to stand by me so warmly! Doubly good in you, who know so little of the troubles and burdens of life.

NORA. I? I know so little of—?

MRS. LIND. [*smiling.*] Oh, well—a little fancy-work, and so forth.—You're a child, Nora.

NORA. [*tosses her head and paces the room.*] Oh, come, you mustn't be so patronizing!

MRS. LIND. No?

NORA. You're like the rest. You all think I'm fit for nothing really serious—

MRS. LIND. Well, well—

NORA. You think I've had no troubles in this weary world.

MRS. LIND. My dear Nora, you've just told me all your troubles.

NORA. Pooh—those trifles! [*softly.*] I haven't told you the great thing.

MRS. LIND. The great thing? What do you mean?

NORA. I know you look down upon me, Christina; but you have no right to. You are proud of having worked so hard and so long for your mother.

MRS. LIND. I am sure I don't look down upon any one; but it's true I am both proud and glad when I remember that I was able to keep my mother's last days free from care.

NORA. And you're proud to think of what you have done for your brothers, too.

MRS. LIND. Have I not the right to be?

NORA. Yes, indeed. But now let me tell you, Christina,—I, too, have something to be proud and glad of.

MRS. LIND. I don't doubt it. But what do you mean?

NORA. Hush! Not so loud. Only think, if Torvald were to hear! He mustn't—not for worlds! No one must know about it, Christina,—no one but you.

MRS. LIND. Why, what can it be?

NORA. Come over here. [*draws her down beside her on the sofa.*] Yes, Christina,—I, too, have something to be proud and glad of. I saved Torvald's life.

MRS. LIND. Saved his life? How?

NORA. I told you about our going to Italy. Torvald would have died but for that.

MRS. LIND. Well—and your father gave you the money.

NORA. [*smilingly.*] Yes, so Torvald and every one believes; but—

MRS. LIND. But—?

NORA. Papa didn't give us one penny. It was *I* that found the money.

MRS. LIND. You? All that money?

NORA. Twelve hundred dollars. Four thousand eight hundred crowns. What do you say to that?

MRS. LIND. My dear Nora, how did you manage it? Did you win it in the lottery?

NORA. [*contemptuously.*] In the lottery? Pooh! Any one could have done that!

MRS. LIND. Then, wherever did you get it from?

NORA. [*hums and smiles mysteriously.*] H'm; tra-la-la-la.

MRS. LIND. Of course you couldn't borrow it.

NORA. No? Why not?

MRS. LIND. Why, a wife can't borrow without her husband's consent.

NORA. [*tossing her head.*] Oh! When the wife has some idea of business, and knows how to set about things—

MRS. LIND. But, Nora, I don't understand—

NORA. Well, you needn't. I never

said I borrowed the money. There are many ways I may have got it. [*throws herself back on the sofa.*] I may have got it from some admirer. When one is so—attractive as I am—

MRS. LIND. You're too silly, Nora.

NORA. Now, I'm sure you're dying of curiosity, Christina,—

MRS. LIND. Listen to me, Nora, dear: haven't you been a little rash?

NORA. [*sitting upright again.*] Is it rash to save one's husband's life?

MRS. LIND. I think it was rash of you, without his knowledge—

NORA. But it would have been fatal for him to know! Can't you understand that? He wasn't even to suspect how ill he was. The doctors came to me privately and told me his life was in danger—that nothing could save him but a winter in the South. Do you think I didn't try diplomacy first? I told him how I longed to have a trip abroad, like other young wives; I wept and prayed; I said he ought to think of my condition, and not to thwart me; and then I hinted that he could borrow the money. But then, Christina, he got almost angry. He said I was frivolous, and that it was his duty as a husband not to yield to my whims and fancies—so he called them. Very well, thought I, but saved you must be; and then I found the way to do it.

MRS. LIND. And did your husband never learn from your father that the money was not from him?

NORA. No; never. Papa died at that very time. I meant to have told him all about it, and begged him to say nothing. But he was so ill, unhappily, it wasn't necessary.

MRS. LIND. And you have never confessed to your husband?

NORA. Good Heavens! What can you be thinking of? *Tell him*, when he has such a loathing of debt! And, besides,—how painful and humiliating it would be for Torvald, with his manly self-respect, to know that he owed anything to me! It would utterly upset the relation between us; our beautiful, happy home would never again be what it is.

MRS. LIND. Will you never tell him?

NORA. [*thoughtfully, half-smiling.*] Yes, some times, perhaps,—many, many years hence, when I'm—not so pretty. You mustn't laugh at me! Of course, I mean when Torvald is not so much in love with me as he is now; when it doesn't amuse him any longer to see me dancing about, and dressing up and acting. Then it might be well to have something in reserve. [*breaking off.*] Nonsense! Nonsense! That time will never come. Now, what do you say to my grand secret, Christina? Am I fit for nothing now? You may believe it has cost me a lot of anxiety. It has been no joke to meet my engagements punctually. You must know, Christina, that in business there are things called installments, and quarterly interest, that are terribly hard to provide for. So I've had to pinch a little here and there, wherever I could. I couldn't save much out of the housekeeping, for, of course, Torvald had to live well. And I couldn't let the children go about badly dressed; all I got for them, I spent on them, the blessed darlings!

MRS. LIND. Poor Nora! So it had to come out of your own pocket-money.

NORA. Yes, of course. After all, the whole thing was my doing. When Torvald gave me money for clothes, and so on, I never spent more than half of it; I always bought the simplest and cheapest things. It's a mercy that everything suits me so well—Torvald never had any suspicions. But it was often very hard, Christina, dear. For it's nice to be beautifully dressed—now, isn't it?

MRS. LIND. Indeed it is.

NORA. Well, and besides that, I made money in other ways. Last winter I was so lucky—I got a heap of copying to do. I shut myself up every evening and wrote far into the night. Oh, sometimes I was so tired, so tired. And yet it was splendid to work in that way and earn money. I almost felt as if I was a man.

MRS. LIND. Then how much have you been able to pay off?

NORA. Well, I can't precisely say. It's difficult to keep that sort of business clear. I only know that I've paid everything I could scrape together. Sometimes I really didn't know where to turn. [*smiles.*] Then I used to sit here and pretend that a rich old gentleman was in love with me—

MRS. LIND. What! What gentleman?

NORA. Oh, nobody!—that he was dead now, and that when his will was opened, there stood in large letters: "Pay over at once everything of which I die possessed to that charming person, Mrs. Nora Helmer."

MRS. LIND. But, my dear Nora,—what gentleman do you mean?

NORA. Oh, dear, can't you understand? There wasn't any old gentleman: it was only what I used to dream and dream when I was at my wits' end for money. But it doesn't matter now—the tiresome old creature may stay where he is for me. I care nothing for him or his will; for now my troubles are over. [*springing up.*] Oh, Christina, how glorious it is to think of! Free from all anxiety! Free, quite free. To be able to play and romp about with the children; to have things tasteful and pretty in the house, exactly as Torvald likes it! And then the spring will soon be here, with the great blue sky. Perhaps then we shall have a little holiday. Perhaps I shall see the sea again. Oh, what a wonderful thing it is to live and to be happy!

[*The hall doorbell rings.*]

MRS. LIND. [*rising.*] There's a ring. Perhaps I had better go.

NORA. No; do stay. No one will come here. It's sure to be some one for Torvald.

ELLEN. [*in the doorway.*] If you please, ma'am, there's a gentleman to speak to Mr. Helmer.

NORA. Who is the gentleman?

KROGSTAD. [*in the doorway.*] It is I, Mrs. Helmer.

[*MRS. LINDEN starts and turns away to the window.*]

NORA. [*goes a step toward him, anxiously, speaking low.*] You? What is

it? What do you want with my husband?

KROGSTAD. Bank business—in a way. I hold a small post in the Joint Stock Bank, and your husband is to be our new chief, I hear.

NORA. Then it is—?

KROGSTAD. Only tiresome business, Mrs. Helmer; nothing more.

NORA. Then will you please go to his study.

[KROGSTAD goes. She bows indifferently while she closes the door into the hall. Then she goes to the stove and looks to the fire.]

MRS. LIND. Nora—who was that man?

NORA. A Mr. Krogstad—a lawyer.

MRS. LIND. Then it was really he?

NORA. Do you know him?

MRS. LIND. I used to know him—many years ago. He was in a lawyer's office in our town.

NORA. Yes, so he was.

MRS. LIND. How he has changed!

NORA. I believe his marriage was unhappy.

MRS. LIND. And he is a widower now?

NORA. With a lot of children. There! Now it will burn up.

[She closes the stove, and pushes the rocking-chair a little aside.]

MRS. LIND. His business is not of the most creditable, they say?

NORA. Isn't it? I dare say not. I don't know. But don't let us think of business—it's so tiresome.

[DOCTOR RANK comes out of HELMER'S room.]

RANK. [still in the doorway.] No, no; I'm in your way. I shall go and have a chat with your wife. [shuts the door and sees MRS. LINDEN.] Oh, I beg your pardon. I'm in the way here too.

NORA. No, not in the least. [introduces them.] Doctor Rank—Mrs. Linden.

RANK. Oh, indeed; I've often heard Mrs. Linden's name; I think I passed you on the stairs as I came up.

MRS. LIND. Yes; I go so very slowly. Stairs try me so much.

RANK. Ah—you are not very strong?

MRS. LIND. Only overworked.

RANK. Nothing more? Then no doubt you've come to town to find rest in a round of dissipation?

MRS. LIND. I have come to look for employment.

RANK. Is that an approved remedy for overwork?

MRS. LIND. One must live, Doctor Rank.

RANK. Yes, that seems to be the general opinion.

NORA. Come, Doctor Rank,—you want to live yourself.

RANK. To be sure I do. However wretched I may be, I want to drag on as long as possible. All my patients, too, have the same mania. And it's the same with people whose complaint is moral. At this very moment Helmer is talking to just such a moral incurable—

MRS. LIND. [softly.] Ah!

NORA. Whom do you mean?

RANK. Oh, a fellow named Krogstad, a man you know nothing about,—corrupt to the very core of his character. But even he began by announcing, as a matter of vast importance, that he must live.

NORA. Indeed? And what did he want with Torvald?

RANK. I haven't an idea; I only gathered that it was some bank business.

NORA. I didn't know that Krogstad—that this Mr. Krogstad had anything to do with the Bank?

RANK. Yes. He has got some sort of place there. [to MRS. LINDEN.] I don't know whether, in your part of the country, you have people who go grubbing and sniffing around in search of moral rottenness—and then, when they have found a "case," don't rest till they have got their man into some good position, where they can keep a watch upon him. Men with a clean bill of health they leave out in the cold.

MRS. LIND. Well; I suppose the—delicate characters require most care.

RANK. [*shrugs his shoulders.*] There we have it! It's that notion that makes society a hospital.

[NORA, deep in her own thoughts, breaks into half-stifled laughter and claps her hands.]

Why do you laugh at that? Have you any idea what "society" is?

NORA. What do I care for your tiresome society? I was laughing at something else—something excessively amusing. Tell me, Doctor Rank, are all the employees at the Bank dependent on Torvald now?

RANK. Is that what strikes you as excessively amusing?

NORA. [*smiles and hums.*] Never mind, never mind! [*walks about the room.*] Yes, it is funny to think that we—that Torvald has such power over so many people. [*takes the bag from her pocket.*] Doctor Rank, will you have a macaroon?

RANK. What!—macaroons! I thought they were contraband here.

NORA. Yes; but Christina brought me these.

MRS. LIND. What! I—?

NORA. Oh, well! Don't be frightened. You couldn't possibly know that Torvald had forbidden them. The fact is, he's afraid of me spoiling my teeth. But, oh, bother, just for once!—That's for you, Doctor Rank! [*puts a macaroon into his mouth.*] And you too, Christina. And I'll have one while we're about it—only a tiny one, or at most two. [*walks about again.*] Oh, dear, I am happy! There's only one thing in the world I really want.

RANK. Well, what's that?

NORA. There's something I should so like to say—in Torvald's hearing.

RANK. Then why don't you say it?

NORA. Because I daren't, it's so ugly.

MRS. LIND. Ugly!

RANK. In that case you'd better not. But to us you might—What is it you would so like to say in Helmer's hearing?

NORA. I should so love to say, "Damn it all!"

RANK. Are you out of your mind?

MRS. LIND. Good gracious, Nora—!

RANK. Say it—there he is!

NORA. [*hides the macaroons.*] Hush—sh—

[HELMER comes out of his room, hat in hand, with his overcoat on his arm.]

[*Going to him.*] Well, Torvald, dear, have you got rid of him?

HELM. Yes; he has just gone.

NORA. Let me introduce you—this is Christina, who has come to town—

HELM. Christina? Pardon me, I don't know—

NORA. Mrs. Linden, Torvald, dear, —Christina Linden.

HELM. [*to MRS. LINDEN.*] Indeed! A school-friend of my wife's, no doubt?

MRS. LIND. Yes; we knew each other as girls.

NORA. And only think! She has taken this long journey on purpose to speak to you.

HELM. To speak to me!

MRS. LIND. Well, not quite—

NORA. You see, Christina is tremendously clever at office work, and she's so anxious to work under a first-rate man of business in order to learn still more—

HELM. [*to MRS. LINDEN.*] Very sensible, indeed.

NORA. And when she heard you were appointed manager—it was telegraphed, you know—she started off at once, and—Torvald, dear, for my sake, you must do something for Christina. Now, can't you?

HELM. It's not impossible. I presume Mrs. Linden is a widow?

MRS. LIND. Yes.

HELM. And you have already had some experience of business?

MRS. LIND. A good deal.

HELM. Well, then, it's very likely I may be able to find a place for you.

NORA. [*clapping her hands.*] There now! There now!

HELM. You have come at a fortunate moment, Mrs. Linden.

MRS. LIND. Oh, how can I thank you—?

HELM. [*smiling.*] There is no occasion. [*puts on his overcoat.*] But for the present you must excuse me—

RANK. Wait; I am going with you.

[*Fetches his fur coat from the hall and warms it at the fire.*]

NORA. Don't be long, Torvald, dear.

HELM. Only an hour; not more.

NORA. Are you going, too, Christina?

MRS. LIND. [*putting on her walking things.*] Yes; I must set about looking for lodgings.

HELM. Then perhaps we can go together?

NORA. [*helping her.*] What a pity we haven't a spare room for you; but it's impossible—

MRS. LIND. I shouldn't think of troubling you. Good-bye, dear Nora, and thank you for all your kindness.

NORA. Good-bye for the present. Of course, you'll come back this evening. And you, too, Doctor Rank. What! If you're well enough? Of course you'll be well enough. Only wrap up warmly. [*they go out, talking, into the hall; outside on the stairs are heard children's voices.*] There they are! There they are! [*she runs to the outer door and opens it; the nurse, ANNA, enters the hall with the children.*] Come in! Come in! [*stoops down and kisses the children.*] Oh, my sweet darlings! Do you see them, Christina? Aren't they lovely?

RANK. Don't let us stand here chattering in the draught.

HELM. Come, Mrs. Linden; only mothers can stand such a temperature.

[*DOCTOR RANK, HELMER, and MRS. LINDEN go down the stairs.*]

[*ANNA enters the room with the children; NORA also, shutting the door.*]

NORA. How fresh and bright you look! And what red cheeks you've got! Like apples and roses. [*the children chatter to her during what follows.*] Have you had great fun? That's splendid! Oh, really! You've been giving Emmy and Bob a ride on your sledge!—both at once, only think! Why, you're quite a man, Ivar. Oh, give her to me a little, Anna. My sweet little dolly! [*takes the smallest*

from the Nurse and dances with her.] Yes, yes; mother will dance with Bob, too. What! Did you have a game of snowballs? Oh, I wish I'd been there. No; leave them, Anna; I'll take their things off. Oh, yes, let me do it; it's such fun. Go to the nursery; you look frozen. You'll find some hot coffee on the stove.

[*The Nurse goes into the room on the left. NORA takes off the children's things and throws them down anywhere, while the children talk all together.*]

Really! A big dog ran after you? But he didn't bite you? No; dogs don't bite dear little dolly children. Don't peep into those parcels, Ivar. What is it? Wouldn't you like to know? Take care—it'll bite! What? Shall we have a game? What shall we play at? Hide-and-seek? Yes, let's play hide-and-seek. Bob shall hide first. Am I to? Yes, let me hide first.

[*She and the children play, with laughter and shouting, in the room and the adjacent one to the right. At last NORA hides under the table; the children come rushing in, look for her, but cannot find her, hear her half-choked laughter, rush to the table, lift up the cover and see her. Loud shouts. She creeps out, as though to frighten them. Fresh shouts.*]

[*Meanwhile there has been a knock at the door leading into the hall. No one has heard it. Now the door is half opened and KROGSTAD appears. He waits a little; the game is renewed.*]

KROGSTAD. I beg your pardon, Mrs. Helmer—

NORA. [*with a suppressed cry, turns round and half jumps up.*] Ah! What do you want?

KROGSTAD. Excuse me; the outer door was ajar—somebody must have forgotten to shut it—

NORA. [*standing up.*] My husband is not at home, Mr. Krogstad.

KROGSTAD. I know it.

NORA. Then what do you want here?

KROGSTAD. To say a few words to you.

NORA. To me? [*to the children, softly.*] Go in to Anna. What? No, the strange man won't hurt mamma. When he's gone we'll go on playing. [*she leads the children into the left-hand room, and shuts the door behind them; uneasy, in suspense.*] It is to me you wish to speak?

KROGSTAD. Yes, to you.

NORA. To-day! But it's not the first yet—

KROGSTAD. No, to-day is Christmas Eve. It will depend upon yourself whether you have a merry Christmas.

NORA. What do you want? I'm not ready to-day.

KROGSTAD. Never mind that just now. I have come about another matter. You have a minute to spare?

NORA. Oh, yes, I suppose so; although—

KROGSTAD. Good. I was sitting in the restaurant opposite, and I saw your husband go down the street—

NORA. Well?

KROGSTAD. With a lady.

NORA. What then?

KROGSTAD. May I ask if the lady was a Mrs. Linden?

NORA. Yes.

KROGSTAD. Who has just come to town?

NORA. Yes. To-day.

KROGSTAD. I believe she is an intimate friend of yours.

NORA. Certainly. But I don't understand—

KROGSTAD. I used to know *her* too.

NORA. I know you did.

KROGSTAD. Ah! You know all about it. I thought as much. Now, frankly, is Mrs. Linden to have a place in the Bank?

NORA. How dare you catechize me in this way, Mr. Krogstad—you, a subordinate of my husband's? But since you ask, you shall know. Yes, Mrs. Linden is to be employed. And it is I who recommended her, Mr. Krogstad. Now you know.

KROGSTAD. Then my guess was right.

NORA. [*walking up and down.*] You see one has a wee bit of influence, after all. It doesn't follow because one's only a woman— When people are in a subordinate position, Mr. Krogstad, they ought really to be careful how they offend anybody who—h'm—

KROGSTAD. Who has influence?

NORA. Exactly.

KROGSTAD. [*taking another tone.*] Mrs. Helmer, will you have the kindness to employ your influence on my behalf?

NORA. What? How do you mean?

KROGSTAD. Will you be so good as to see that I retain my subordinate position in the Bank?

NORA. What do you mean? Who wants to take it from you?

KROGSTAD. Oh, you needn't pretend ignorance. I can very well understand that it cannot be pleasant for your friend to meet me; and I can also understand now for whose sake I am to be hounded out.

NORA. But I assure you—

KROGSTAD. Come, come, now, once for all: there is time yet, and I advise you to use your influence to prevent it.

NORA. But, Mr. Krogstad, I have no influence—absolutely none.

KROGSTAD. None? I thought you said a moment ago—

NORA. Of course, not in that sense. I! How can you imagine that I should have any such influence over my husband?

KROGSTAD. Oh, I know your husband from our college days. I don't think he is any more inflexible than other husbands.

NORA. If you talk disrespectfully of my husband, I must request you to leave the house.

KROGSTAD. You are bold, madam.

NORA. I am afraid of you no longer. When New Year's Day is over, I shall soon be out of the whole business.

KROGSTAD. [*controlling himself.*] Listen to me, Mrs. Helmer. If need be, I shall fight as though for my life to keep my little place in the Bank.

NORA. Yes, so it seems.

KROGSTAD. It's not only for the

salary: that is what I care least about. It's something else— Well, I had better make a clean breast of it. Of course, you know, like every one else, that some years ago I—got into trouble.

NORA. I think I've heard something of the sort.

KROGSTAD. The matter never came into court; but from that moment all paths were barred to me. Then I took up the business you know about. I had to turn my hand to something; and I don't think I've been one of the worst. But now I must get clear of it all. My sons are growing up; for their sake I must try to recover my character as well as I can. This place in the Bank was the first step; and now your husband wants to kick me off the ladder, back into the mire.

NORA. But I assure you, Mr. Krogstad, I haven't the least power to help you.

KROGSTAD. That is because you have not the will; but I can compel you.

NORA. You won't tell my husband that I owe you money?

KROGSTAD. H'm; suppose I were to?

NORA. It would be shameful of you. [*with tears in her voice.*] The secret that is my joy and my pride—that he should learn it in such an ugly, coarse way—and from you. It would involve me in all sorts of unpleasantness—

KROGSTAD. Only unpleasantness?

NORA. [*hotly.*] But just do it. It's you that will come off worst, for then my husband will see what a bad man you are, and then you certainly won't keep your place.

KROGSTAD. I asked whether it was only domestic unpleasantness you feared?

NORA. If my husband gets to know about it, he will, of course, pay you off at once, and then we shall have nothing more to do with you.

KROGSTAD. [*coming a pace nearer.*] Listen, Mrs. Helmer: either your memory is defective, or you don't know much about business. I must make the position a little clearer to you.

NORA. How so?

KROGSTAD. When your husband was ill, you came to me to borrow twelve hundred dollars.

NORA. I knew of nobody else.

KROGSTAD. I promised to find you the money—

NORA. And you did find it.

KROGSTAD. I promised to find you the money, on certain conditions. You were so much taken up at the time about your husband's illness, and so eager to have the wherewithal for your journey, that you probably did not give much thought to the details. Allow me to remind you of them. I promised to find you the amount in exchange for a note of hand, which I drew up.

NORA. Yes, and I signed it.

KROGSTAD. Quite right. But then I added a few lines, making your father security for the debt. Your father was to sign this.

NORA. Was to—? He did sign it!

KROGSTAD. I had left the date blank. That is to say, your father was himself to date his signature. Do you recollect that?

NORA. Yes, I believe—

KROGSTAD. Then I gave you the paper to send to your father, by post. Is not that so?

NORA. Yes.

KROGSTAD. And of course you did so at once; for within five or six days you brought me back the document with your father's signature; and I handed you the money.

NORA. Well? Have I not made my payments punctually?

KROGSTAD. Fairly—yes. But to return to the point: You were in great trouble at the time, Mrs. Helmer!

NORA. I was, indeed!

KROGSTAD. Your father was very ill, I believe?

NORA. He was on his death-bed.

KROGSTAD. And died soon after?

NORA. Yes.

KROGSTAD. Tell me, Mrs. Helmer; do you happen to recollect the day of his death? The day of the month, I mean?

NORA. Father died on the 29th of September.

KROGSTAD. Quite correct. I have made inquiries. And here comes in the remarkable point—[*produces a paper*] which I cannot explain.

NORA. What remarkable point? I don't know—

KROGSTAD. The remarkable point, madam, that your father signed this paper three days after his death!

NORA. What! I don't understand—

KROGSTAD. Your father died on the 29th of September. But look here: he has dated his signature October 2d! Is not that remarkable, Mrs. Helmer? [NORA is silent.] Can you explain it? [NORA continues silent.] It is noteworthy, too, that the words "October 2d" and the year are not in your father's handwriting, but in one which I believe I know. Well, this may be explained; your father may have forgotten to date his signature, and somebody may have added the date at random, before the fact of your father's death was known. There is nothing wrong in that. Everything depends on the signature. Of course, it is genuine, Mrs. Helmer? It was really your father himself who wrote his name here?

NORA. [*after a short silence, throws her head back and looks defiantly at him.*] No, it was not. I wrote father's name.

KROGSTAD. Ah!—Are you aware, madam, that that is a dangerous admission?

NORA. How so? You will soon get your money.

KROGSTAD. May I ask you one more question? Why did you not send the paper to your father?

NORA. It was impossible. Father was ill. If I had asked him for his signature, I should have had to tell him why I wanted the money; but he was so ill I really could not tell him that my husband's life was in danger. It was impossible.

KROGSTAD. Then it would have been better to have given up your tour.

NORA. No, I couldn't do that; my husband's life depended on that journey. I couldn't give it up.

KROGSTAD. And did it never occur to you that you were playing me false?

NORA. That was nothing to me. I didn't care in the least about you. I couldn't endure you for all the cruel difficulties you made, although you knew how ill my husband was.

KROGSTAD. Mrs. Helmer, you evidently do not realize what you have been guilty of. But I can assure you it was nothing more and nothing worse than made me an outcast from society.

NORA. You! You want me to believe that you did a brave thing to save your wife's life?

KROGSTAD. The law takes no account of motives.

NORA. Then it must be a very bad law.

KROGSTAD. Bad or not, if I produce this document in court, you will be condemned according to law.

NORA. I don't believe that. Do you mean to tell me that a daughter has no right to spare her dying father trouble and anxiety?—that a wife has no right to save her husband's life? I don't know much about the law, but I'm sure you'll find, somewhere or another, that that is allowed. And you don't know that—you, a lawyer! You must be a bad one, Mr. Krogstad.

KROGSTAD. Possibly. But business—such business as ours—I do understand. You believe that? Very well; now, do as you please. But this I may tell you, that if I am flung into the gutter a second time, you shall keep me company.

[*Bows and goes out through hall.*]

NORA. [*stands a while thinking, then tosses her head.*] Oh, nonsense! He wants to frighten me. I'm not so foolish as that. [*begins folding the children's clothes; pauses.*] But—? No, it's impossible! Why, I did it for love!

CHILDREN. [*at the door, left.*] Mamma, the strange man has gone now.

NORA. Yes, yes, I know. But don't tell any one about the strange man. Do you hear? Not even papa!

CHILDREN. No, mamma; and now will you play with us again?

NORA. No, no; not now.

CHILDREN. Oh, do, mamma; you know you promised.

NORA. Yes, but I can't just now. Run to the nursery; I have so much to do. Run along, run along, and be good, my darlings! [*she pushes them gently into the inner room, and closes the door behind them; sits on the sofa, embroiders a few stitches, but soon pauses.*] No! [*throws down the work, rises, goes to the hall door and calls out.*] Ellen, bring in the Christmas tree! [*goes to table, left, and opens the drawer; again pauses.*] No, it's quite impossible!

ELLEN. [*with Christmas tree.*] Where shall I stand it, ma'am?

NORA. There, in the middle of the room.

ELLEN. Shall I bring in anything else?

NORA. No, thank you, I have all I want.

[*ELLEN, having put down the tree, goes out.*]

NORA. [*busy dressing the tree.*] There must be a candle here—and flowers there.—That horrible man! Nonsense, nonsense! there's nothing to be afraid of. The Christmas tree shall be beautiful. I'll do everything to please you, Torvald; I'll sing and dance, and—

[*Enter HELMER by the hall door, with a bundle of documents.*]

NORA. Oh! You're back already?

HELM. Yes. Has anybody been here?

NORA. Here? No.

HELM. That's odd. I saw Krogstad come out of the house.

NORA. Did you? Oh, yes, by the bye, he was here for a minute.

HELM. Nora, I can see by your manner that he has been begging you to put in a good word for him.

NORA. Yes.

HELM. And you were to do it as if of your own accord? You were to say nothing to me of his having been here. Didn't he suggest that, too?

NORA. Yes, Torvald; but—

HELM. Nora, Nora! And you could condescend to that! To speak to such a man, to make him a promise! And then to tell me an untruth about it!

NORA. An untruth!

HELM. Didn't you say that nobody had been here? [*threatens with his finger.*] My little bird must never do that again! A song-bird must sing clear and true; no false notes. [*puts his arm round her.*] That's so, isn't it? Yes, I was sure of it. [*lets her go.*] And now we'll say no more about it.

[*Sits down before the fire.*]

Oh, how cozy and quiet it is here!

[*Glances into his documents.*]
NORA. [*busy with the tree, after a short silence.*] Torvald!

HELM. Yes.

NORA. I'm looking forward so much to the Stenborgs' fancy ball the day after to-morrow.

HELM. And I'm on tenterhooks to see what surprise you have in store for me.

NORA. Oh, it's too tiresome!

HELM. What is?

NORA. I can't think of anything good. Everything seems so foolish and meaningless.

HELM. Has little Nora made that discovery?

NORA. [*behind his chair, with her arms on the back.*] Are you very busy, Torvald?

HELM. Well—

NORA. What papers are those?

HELM. Bank business.

NORA. Already!

HELM. I have got the retiring manager to let me make some necessary changes in the staff and the organization. I can do this during Christmas week. I want to have everything straight by the New Year.

NORA. Then that's why that poor Krogstad—

HELM. H'm.

NORA. [*still leaning over the chair-back and slowly stroking his hair.*] If you hadn't been so very busy, I should have asked you a great, great favor, Torvald.

HELM. What can it be? Out with it.

NORA. Nobody has such perfect taste as you; and I should so love to look well at the fancy ball. Torvald, dear, couldn't you take me in hand, and settle what I'm to be, and arrange my costume for me?

HELM. Aha! So my willful little woman is at a loss, and making signals of distress.

NORA. Yes, please, Torvald. I can't get on without your help.

HELM. Well, well, I'll think it over, and we'll soon hit upon something.

NORA. Oh, how good that is of you! [*goes to the tree again; pause.*] How well the red flowers show!—Tell me, was it anything so very dreadful this Krogstad got into trouble about?

HELM. Forgery, that's all. Don't you know what that means?

NORA. Mayn't he have been driven to it by need?

HELM. Yes; or, like so many others, he may have done it in pure heedlessness. I am not so hard-hearted as to condemn a man absolutely for a single fault.

NORA. No, surely not, Torvald!

HELM. Many a man can retrieve his character, if he owns his crime and takes the punishment.

NORA. Punishment—?

HELM. But Krogstad didn't do that. He evaded the law by means of tricks and subterfuges; and that is what has morally ruined him.

NORA. Do you think that—?

HELM. Just think how a man with a thing of that sort on his conscience must be always lying and canting and shamming. Think of the mask he must wear even toward those who stand nearest him—toward his own wife and children. The effect on the children—that's the most terrible part of it, Nora.

NORA. Why?

HELM. Because in such an atmosphere of lies home life is poisoned and contaminated in every fiber. Every breath the children draw contains some germ of evil.

NORA. [*closer behind him.*] Are you sure of that?

HELM. As a lawyer, my dear, I have seen it often enough. Nearly all cases of early corruption may be traced to lying mothers.

NORA. Why—mothers?

HELM. It generally comes from the mother's side; but of course the father's influence may act in the same way. Every lawyer knows it too well. And here has this Krogstad been poisoning his own children for years past by a life of lies and hypocrisy—that is why I call him morally ruined. [*holds out both hands to her.*] So my sweet little Nora must promise not to plead his cause. Shake hands upon it. Come, come, what's this? Give me your hand. That's right. Then it's a bargain. I assure you it would have been impossible for me to work with him. It gives me a positive sense of physical discomfort to come in contact with such people.

[*NORA draws her hand away, and moves to the other side of the Christmas tree.*]

NORA. How warm it is here! And I have so much to do.

HELM. [*rises and gathers up his papers.*] Yes, and I must try to get some of these papers looked through before dinner. And I shall think over your costume too. Perhaps I may even find something to hang in gilt paper on the Christmas tree. [*lays his hand on her head.*] My precious little songbird!

[*He goes into his room and shuts the door.*]

NORA. [*softly, after a pause.*] It can't be. It's impossible. It must be impossible!

ANNA. [*at the door, left.*] The little ones are begging so prettily to come to mamma.

NORA. No, no, no; don't let them come to me! Keep them with you, Anna.

ANNA. Very well, ma'am.

[*Shuts the door.*]

NORA. [*pale with terror.*] Corrupt my children!—Poison my home! [*short pause; she throws back her head.*] It's not true! It can never, never be true!

ACT II

The same room. In the corner, beside the piano, stands the Christmas tree, stripped, and with the candles burnt out. NORA's outdoor things lie on the sofa.

[NORA, alone, is walking about restlessly. At last she stops by the sofa, and takes up her cloak.]

NORA. [*dropping the cloak.*] There's somebody coming! [*goes to the hall door and listens.*] Nobody; of course nobody will come to-day, Christmas Day; nor to-morrow either. But perhaps—[*opens the door and looks out.*]—No, nothing in the letter box; quite empty. [*comes forward.*] Stuff and nonsense! Of course he won't really do anything. Such a thing couldn't happen. It's impossible! Why, I have three little children.

[ANNA enters from the left, with a large cardboard box.]

ANNA. I've found the box with the fancy dress at last.

NORA. Thanks; put it down on the table.

ANNA. [*doing so.*] But I'm afraid it's very much out of order.

NORA. Oh, I wish I could tear it into a hundred thousand pieces!

ANNA. Oh, no. It can easily be put to rights—just a little patience.

NORA. I shall go and get Mrs. Linden to help me.

ANNA. Going out again? In such weather as this! You'll catch cold, ma'am, and be ill.

NORA. Worse things might happen.—What are the children doing?

ANNA. They're playing with their Christmas presents, poor little dears; but—

NORA. Do they often ask for me?

ANNA. You see they've been so used to having their mamma with them.

NORA. Yes; but, Anna, I can't have them so much with me in future.

ANNA. Well, little children get used to anything.

NORA. Do you think they do? Do you believe they would forget their mother if she went quite away?

ANNA. Gracious me! Quite away?

NORA. Tell me, Anna,—I've so often wondered about it,—how could you bring yourself to give your child up to strangers?

ANNA. I had to when I came to nurse my little Miss Nora.

NORA. But how could you make up your mind to it?

ANNA. When I had the chance of such a good place? A poor girl who's been in trouble must take what comes. That wicked man did nothing for me.

NORA. But your daughter must have forgotten you.

ANNA. Oh, no, ma'am, that she hasn't. She wrote to me both when she was confirmed and when she was married.

NORA. [*embracing her.*] Dear old Anna—you were a good mother to me when I was little.

ANNA. My poor little Nora had no mother but me.

NORA. And if my little ones had nobody else, I'm sure you would—Nonsense, nonsense! [*opens the box.*] Go in to the children. Now I must—You'll see how lovely I shall be to-morrow.

ANNA. I'm sure there will be no one at the ball so lovely as my Miss Nora.

[*She goes into the room on the left.*]

NORA. [*takes the costume out of the box, but soon throws it down again.*] Oh, if I dared go out. If only nobody would come. If only nothing would happen here in the meantime. Rubbish; nobody is coming. Only not to think. What a delicious muff! Beautiful gloves, beautiful gloves! To forget—to forget! One, two, three, four, five, six—[*with a scream.*] Ah, there they come.

[*Goes toward the door, then stands irresolute.*]

[MRS. LINDEN enters from the hall, where she has taken off her things.]

NORA. Oh, it's you, Christina. There's nobody else there? I'm so glad you have come.

MRS. LIND. I hear you called at my lodgings.

NORA. Yes, I was just passing. There's something you *must* help me with. Let us sit here on the sofa—so. To-morrow evening there's to be a fancy ball at Consul Stenborg's over-head, and Torvald wants me to appear as a Neapolitan fisher-girl, and dance the *tarantella*; I learned it at Capri.

MRS. LIND. I see—quite a performance.

NORA. Yes, Torvald wishes it. Look, this is the costume; Torvald had it made for me in Italy. But now it's all so torn, I don't know—

MRS. LIND. Oh, we shall soon set that to rights. It's only the trimming that has come loose here and there. Have you a needle and thread? Ah, here's the very thing.

NORA. Oh, how kind of you!

MRS. LIND. [*sewing.*] So you're to be in costume to-morrow, Nora? I'll tell you what—I shall come in for a moment to see you in all your glory. But I've quite forgotten to thank you for the pleasant evening yesterday.

NORA. [*rises and walks across the room.*] Oh, yesterday, it didn't seem so pleasant as usual.—You should have come to town a little sooner, Christina.—Torvald has certainly the art of making home bright and beautiful.

MRS. LIND. You, too, I should think, or you wouldn't be your father's daughter. But tell me—is Doctor Rank always so depressed as he was last evening?

NORA. No, yesterday it was particularly noticeable. You see, he suffers from a dreadful illness. He has spinal consumption, poor fellow. They say his father was a horrible man, who kept mistresses and all sorts of things—so the son has been sickly from his childhood, you understand.

MRS. LIND. [*lets her sewing fall into her lap.*] Why, my darling Nora, how do you come to know such things?

NORA. [*moving about the room.*] Oh,

when one has three children, one sometimes has visits from women who are half-half doctors—and they talk of one thing and another.

MRS. LIND. [*goes on sewing; a short pause.*] Does Doctor Rank come here every day?

NORA. Every day of his life. He has been Torvald's most intimate friend from boyhood, and he's a good friend of mine, too. Doctor Rank is quite one of the family.

MRS. LIND. But tell me—is he quite sincere? I mean, isn't he rather given to flattering people?

NORA. No, quite the contrary. Why should you think so?

MRS. LIND. When you introduced us yesterday he said he had often heard my name; but I noticed afterwards that your husband had no notion who I was. How could Doctor Rank—?

NORA. He was quite right, Christina. You see, Torvald loves me so indescribably, he wants to have me all to himself, as he says. When we were first married, he was almost jealous if I even mentioned any of my old friends at home; so naturally I gave up doing it. But I often talk of the old times to Doctor Rank, for he likes to hear about them.

MRS. LIND. Listen to me, Nora! You are still a child in many ways. I am older than you, and have had more experience. I'll tell you something. You ought to get clear of all this with Doctor Rank.

NORA. Get clear of what?

MRS. LIND. The whole affair, I should say. You were talking yesterday of a rich admirer who was to find you money—

NORA. Yes, one who never existed, worse luck! What then?

MRS. LIND. Has Doctor Rank money?

NORA. Yes, he has.

MRS. LIND. And nobody to provide for?

NORA. Nobody. But—?

MRS. LIND. And he comes here every day?

NORA. Yes, I told you so.

MRS. LIND. I should have thought he would have had better taste.

NORA. I don't understand you a bit.

MRS. LIND. Don't pretend, Nora. Do you suppose I can't guess who lent you the twelve hundred dollars?

NORA. Are you out of your senses? How can you think such a thing? A friend who comes here every day! Why, the position would be unbearable!

MRS. LIND. Then it really is not he?

NORA. No, I assure you. It never for a moment occurred to me—Besides, at that time he had nothing to lend; he came into his property afterwards.

MRS. LIND. Well, I believe that was lucky for you, Nora, dear.

NORA. No, really, it would never have struck me to ask Doctor Rank—And yet, I'm certain that if I did—

MRS. LIND. But of course you never would.

NORA. Of course not. It's inconceivable that it should ever be necessary. But I'm quite sure that if I spoke to Doctor Rank—

MRS. LIND. Behind your husband's back?

NORA. I must get clear of the other thing; that's behind his back too. I *must* get clear of that.

MRS. LIND. Yes, yes, I told you so yesterday; but—

NORA. [*walking up and down.*] A man can manage these things much better than a woman.

MRS. LIND. One's own husband, yes.

NORA. Nonsense. [*stands still.*] When everything is paid, one gets back the paper.

MRS. LIND. Of course.

NORA. And can tear it into a hundred thousand pieces, and burn it up, the nasty, filthy thing!

MRS. LIND. [*looks at her fixedly, lays down her work, and rises slowly.*] Nora, you are hiding something from me.

NORA. Can you see it in my face?

MRS. LIND. Something has happened since yesterday morning. Nora, what is it?

NORA. [*going toward her.*] Christina—! [*listens.*] Hush! There's Torvald coming home. Do you mind going into the nursery for the present? Torvald can't bear to see dressmaking going on. Get Anna to help you.

MRS. LIND. [*gathers some of the things together.*] Very well; but I shan't go away until you have told me all about it.

[*She goes out to the left.*]

[*HELMER enters from the hall.*]

NORA. [*runs to meet him.*] Oh, how I've been longing for you to come, Torvald, dear!

HELM. Was that the dressmaker—?

NORA. No, Christina. She's helping me with my costume. You'll see how nice I shall look.

HELM. Yes, wasn't that a happy thought of mine?

NORA. Splendid! But isn't it good of me, too, to have given in to you about the *tarantella*?

HELM. [*takes her under the chin.*] Good of you! To give in to your own husband? Well, well, you little mad-cap, I know you don't mean it. But I won't disturb you. I dare say you want to be "trying on."

NORA. And you are going to work, I suppose?

HELM. Yes. [*shows her a bundle of papers.*] Look here. I've just come from the Bank—

[*Goes toward his room.*]

NORA. Torvald.

HELM. [*stopping.*] Yes?

NORA. If your little squirrel were to beg you for something so prettily—

HELM. Well?

NORA. Would you do it?

HELM. I must know first what it is.

NORA. The squirrel would skip about and play all sorts of tricks if you would only be nice and kind.

HELM. Come, then, out with it.

NORA. Your lark would twitter from morning till night—

HELM. Oh, that she does in any case.

NORA. I'll be an elf and dance in the moonlight for you, Torvald.

HELM. Nora—you can't mean what you were hinting at this morning?

NORA. [*coming nearer.*] Yes, Torvald, I beg and implore you!

HELM. Have you really the courage to begin that again?

NORA. Yes, yes; for my sake, you *must* let Krogstad keep his place in the Bank.

HELM. My dear Nora, it's his place I intend for Mrs. Linden.

NORA. Yes, that's so good of you. But instead of Krogstad, you could dismiss some other clerk.

HELM. Why, this is incredible obstinacy! Because you have thoughtlessly promised to put in a word for him, I am to—!

NORA. It's not that, Torvald. It's for your own sake. This man writes for the most scurrilous newspapers; you said so yourself. He can do you no end of harm. I'm so terribly afraid of him—

HELM. Ah, I understand; it's old recollections that are frightening you.

NORA. What do you mean?

HELM. Of course, you're thinking of your father.

NORA. Yes—yes, of course. Only think of the shameful slanders wicked people used to write about father. I believe they would have got him dismissed if you hadn't been sent to look into the thing, and been kind to him, and helped him.

HELM. My little Nora, between your father and me there is all the difference in the world. Your father was not altogether unimpeachable. I am; and I hope to remain so.

NORA. Oh, no one knows what wicked men may hit upon. We could live so quietly and happily now, in our cozy, peaceful home, you and I and the children, Torvald! That's why I beg and implore you—

HELM. And it is just by pleading his cause that you make it impossible for me to keep him. It's already known at the Bank that I intend to dismiss Krogstad. If it were now reported that the new manager let himself be turned round his wife's little finger—

NORA. What then?

HELM. Oh, nothing, so long as a willful woman can have her way—I am to make myself a laughing-stock to the whole staff, and set people saying that I am open to all sorts of outside influence? Take my word for it, I should soon feel the consequences. And besides—there is one thing that makes Krogstad impossible for me to work with—

NORA. What thing?

HELM. I could perhaps have overlooked his moral failings at a pinch—

NORA. Yes, couldn't you, Torvald?

HELM. And I hear he is good at his work. But the fact is, he was a college chum of mine—there was one of those rash friendships between us that one so often repents of later. I may as well confess it at once—he calls me by my Christian name; and he is tactless enough to do it even when others are present. He delights in putting on airs of familiarity—"Torvald" here, "Torvald" there! I assure you it's most painful to me. He would make my position at the Bank perfectly unendurable.

NORA. Torvald, surely you're not serious?

HELM. No? Why not?

NORA. That's such a petty reason.

HELM. What! Petty! Do you consider me petty!

NORA. No, on the contrary, Torvald, dear; and that's just why—

HELM. Never mind; you call my motives petty; then I must be petty too. Petty! Very well!—Now we'll put an end to this, once for all. [*goes to the door into the hall and calls.*] Ellen!

NORA. What do you want?

HELM. [*searching among his papers.*] To settle the thing.

[*ELLEN enters.*]

Here; take this letter; give it to a messenger. See that he takes it at once. The address is on it. Here's the money.

ELLEN. Very well, sir.

[*Goes with the letter.*]

HELM. [*putting his papers together.*] There, Madam Obstinacy.

NORA. [*breathless.*] Torvald—what was in the letter?

HELM. Krogstad's dismissal.

NORA. Call it back again, Torvald! There's still time. Oh, Torvald, call it back again! For my sake, for your own, for the children's sake! Do you hear, Torvald? Do it! You don't know what that letter may bring upon us all.

HELM. Too late.

NORA. Yes, too late.

HELM. My dear Nora, I forgive your anxiety, though it's anything but flattering to me. Why should you suppose that I would be afraid of a wretched scribbler's spite? But I forgive you all the same, for it's a proof of your great love for me. [*takes her in his arms.*] That's as it should be, my own dear Nora. Let what will happen—when it comes to the pinch, I shall have strength and courage enough. You shall see; my shoulders are broad enough to bear the whole burden.

NORA. [*terror-struck.*] What do you mean by that?

HELM. The whole burden, I say—

NORA. [*with decision.*] That you shall never, never do!

HELM. Very well; then we'll share it, Nora, as man and wife. That is how it should be. [*petting her.*] Are you satisfied now? Come, come, come, don't look like a scared dove. It's all nothing—foolish fancies.—Now you ought to play the *tarantella* through and practice with the tambourine. I shall sit in my inner room and shut both doors, so that I shall hear nothing. You can make as much noise as you please. [*turns round in doorway.*] And when Rank comes, just tell him where I'm to be found.

[*He nods to her, and goes with his papers into his room; closing the door.*]

NORA. [*bewildered with terror, stands as though rooted to the ground, and whispers.*] He would do it. Yes, he would do it. He would do it, in spite of all the world.—No, never that, never,

never! Anything rather than that! Oh, for some way of escape! What shall I do—! [*hall bell rings.*] Doctor Rank—! Anything, anything, rather than—!

[*NORA draws her hands over her face, pulls herself together, goes to the door and opens it.*]

RANK stands outside hanging up his fur coat. - During what follows it begins to grow dark.]

NORA. Good-afternoon, Doctor Rank. I knew you by your ring. But you mustn't go to Torvald now. I believe he's busy.

RANK. And you?

[*Enters and closes the door.*]

NORA. Oh, you know very well, I have always time for you.

RANK. Thank you. I shall avail myself of your kindness as long as I can.

NORA. What do you mean? As long as you can?

RANK. Yes. Does *that* frighten you?

NORA. I think it's an odd expression. Do you expect anything to happen?

RANK. Something I have long been prepared for; but I didn't think it would come so soon.

NORA. [*catching at his arm.*] What have you discovered? Doctor Rank, you must tell me!

RANK. [*sitting down by the stove.*] I am running down hill. There's no help for it.

NORA. [*drawing a long breath of relief.*] It's you—?

RANK. Who else should it be?—Why lie to one's self? I am the most wretched of all my patients, Mrs. Helmer. In these last days I have been auditing my life-account—bankrupt! Perhaps before a month is over, I shall lie rotting in the churchyard.

NORA. Oh! What an ugly way to talk.

RANK. The thing itself is so profoundly ugly, you see. But the worst of it is, so many other ugly things have to be gone through first. There is only one last investigation to be made, and when that is over I shall

know pretty certainly when the break-up will begin. There's one thing I want to say to you: Helmer's delicate nature shrinks so from all that is horrible: I will not have him in my sick-room—

NORA. But, Doctor Rank—

RANK. I won't have him, I say—not on any account. I shall lock my door against him.—As soon as I am quite certain of the worst, I shall send you my visiting-card with a black cross on it; and then you will know that the final horror has begun.

NORA. Why, you're perfectly unreasonable to-day; and I did so want you to be in a really good humor.

RANK. With death staring me in the face?—And to suffer thus for another's sin! Where's the justice of it? And in one way or another you can trace in every family some such inexorable retribution—

NORA. [*stopping her ears.*] Nonsense, nonsense! Now, cheer up!

RANK. Well, after all, the whole thing's only worth laughing at. My poor innocent spine must do penance for my father's wild oats.

NORA. [*at table, left.*] I suppose he was too fond of asparagus and Strasbourg pâté, wasn't he?

RANK. Yes; and truffles.

NORA. Yes, truffles, to be sure. And oysters, I believe?

RANK. Yes, oysters; oysters, of course.

NORA. And then all the port and champagne! It's sad that all these good things should attack the spine.

RANK. Especially when the luckless spine attacked never had any good of them.

NORA. Ah, yes, that's the worst of it.

RANK. [*looks at her searchingly.*] H'm—

NORA. [*a moment later.*] Why did you smile?

RANK. No; it was you that laughed.

NORA. No; it was you that smiled, Doctor Rank.

RANK. [*standing up.*] I see you're deeper than I thought.

NORA. I'm in such a crazy mood to-day.

RANK. So it seems.

NORA. [*with her hands on his shoulders.*] Dear, dear Doctor Rank, death shall not take you away from Torvald and me.

RANK. Oh, you'll easily get over the loss. The absent are soon forgotten.

NORA. [*looks at him anxiously.*] Do you think so?

RANK. People make fresh ties, and then—

NORA. Who make fresh ties?

RANK. You and Helmer will, when I am gone. You yourself are taking time by the forelock, it seems to me. What was that Mrs. Linden doing here yesterday?

NORA. Oh!—you're surely not jealous of poor Christina?

RANK. Yes, I am. She will be my successor in this house. When I am out of the way, this woman will, perhaps—

NORA. Hush! Not so loud! She's in there.

RANK. To-day as well? You see!

NORA. Only to put my costume in order—dear me, how unreasonable you are! [*sits on sofa.*] Now, do be good, Doctor Rank! To-morrow you shall see how beautifully I shall dance; and then you may fancy that I'm doing it all to please you—and of course Torvald as well. [*takes various things out of box.*] Doctor Rank, sit down here, and I'll show you something.

RANK. [*sitting.*] What is it?

NORA. Look here. Look!

RANK. Silk stockings.

NORA. Flesh-colored. Aren't they lovely? It's so dark here now; but to-morrow—No, no, no; you must only look at the feet. Oh, well, I suppose you may look at the rest too.

RANK. H'm—

NORA. What are you looking so critical about? Do you think they won't fit me?

RANK. I can't possibly give any competent opinion on that point.

NORA. [*looking at him a moment.*]

For shame! [*hits him lightly on the ear with the stockings.*] Take that.

[*Rolls them up again.*]

RANK. And what other wonders am I to see?

NORA. You shan't see anything more; for you don't behave nicely.

[*She hums a little and searches among the things.*]

RANK. [*after a short silence.*] When I sit here gossiping with you, I can't imagine—I simply cannot conceive—what would have become of me if I had never entered this house.

NORA. [*smiling.*] Yes, I think you do feel at home with us.

RANK. [*more softly—looking straight before him.*] And now to have to leave it all—

NORA. Nonsense. You shan't leave us.

RANK. [*in the same tone.*] And not to be able to leave behind the slightest token of gratitude; scarcely even a passing regret—nothing but an empty place, that can be filled by the first comer.

NORA. And if I were to ask you for— No—

RANK. For what?

NORA. For a great proof of your friendship.

RANK. Yes—yes?

NORA. I mean—for a very, very great service—

RANK. Would you really, for once, make me so happy?

NORA. Oh, you don't know what it is.

RANK. Then tell me.

NORA. No, I really can't, Doctor Rank. It's far, far too much—not only a service, but help and advice, besides—

RANK. So much the better. I can't think what you can mean. But go on. Don't you trust me?

NORA. As I trust no one else. I know you are my best and truest friend. So I will tell you. Well, then, Doctor Rank, there is something you must help me to prevent. You know how deeply, how wonderfully Torvald loves me; he wouldn't hesitate a moment to give his very life for my sake.

RANK. [*bending toward her.*] Nora—do you think he is the only one who—?

NORA. [*with a slight start.*] Who—?

RANK. Who would gladly give his life for you?

NORA. [*sadly.*] Oh!

RANK. I have sworn that you shall know it before I—go. I shall never find a better opportunity.—Yes, Nora, now I have told you; and now you know that you can trust me as you can no one else.

NORA. [*standing up; simply and calmly.*] Let me pass, please.

RANK. [*makes way for her, but remains sitting.*] Nora—

NORA. [*in the doorway.*] Ellen, bring the lamp. [*crosses to the stove.*] Oh, dear, Doctor Rank, that was too bad of you.

RANK. [*rising.*] That I have loved you as deeply as—any one else? Was that too bad of me?

NORA. No, but that you should have told me so. It was so unnecessary—

RANK. What do you mean? Did you know—?

[*ELLEN enters with the lamp; sets it on the table and goes out again.*]

Nora—Mrs. Helmer—I ask you, did you know?

NORA. Oh, how can I tell what I knew or didn't know? I really can't say—How could you be so clumsy, Doctor Rank? It was all so nice!

RANK. Well, at any rate, you know now that I am at your service, body and soul. And now, go on.

NORA. [*looking at him.*] Go on—now?

RANK. I beg you to tell me what you want.

NORA. I can tell you nothing now.

RANK. Yes, yes! You mustn't punish me in that way. Let me do for you whatever a man can.

NORA. You can do nothing for me now.—Besides, I really want no help. You shall see it was only my fancy. Yes, it must be so. Of course! [*sits in the rocking-chair, looks at him and*

smiles.] You are a nice person, Doctor Rank! Aren't you ashamed of yourself, now that the lamp is on the table?

RANK. No; not exactly. But perhaps I ought to go—forever.

NORA. No, indeed, you mustn't. Of course, you must come and go as you've always done. You know very well that Torvald can't do without you.

RANK. Yes, but you?

NORA. Oh, you know I always like to have you here.

RANK. That is just what led me astray. You are a riddle to me. It has often seemed to me as if you liked being with me almost as much as being with Helmer.

NORA. Yes; don't you see? There are people one loves, and others one likes to talk to.

RANK. Yes—there's something in that.

NORA. When I was a girl, of course, I loved papa best. But it always delighted me to steal into the servants' room. In the first place they never lectured me, and in the second it was such fun to hear them talk.

RANK. Ah, I see; then it's *their* place I have taken?

NORA. [*jumps up and hurries toward him.*] Oh, my dear Doctor Rank, I don't mean that. But you understand, with Torvald it's the same as with papa—

[*ELLEN enters from the hall.*]

ELLEN. Please, ma'am—

[*Whispers to NORA, and gives her a card.*]

NORA. [*glancing at card.*] Ah!

[*Puts it in her pocket.*]

RANK. Anything wrong?

NORA. No, no, not in the least. It's only—it's my new costume—

RANK. Your costume! Why, it's there.

NORA. Oh, that one, yes. But this is another that—I have ordered it—Torvald mustn't know—

RANK. Aha! So that's the great secret.

NORA. Yes, of course. Please go to

him; he's in the inner room. Do keep him while I—

RANK. Don't be alarmed; he shan't escape. [*Goes into HELMER's room.*]

NORA. [*to ELLEN.*] Is he waiting in the kitchen?

ELLEN. Yes, he came up the back stair—

NORA. Didn't you tell him I was engaged?

ELLEN. Yes, but it was no use.

NORA. He won't go away?

ELLEN. No, ma'am, not until he has spoken to you.

NORA. Then let him come in; but quietly. And, Ellen—say nothing about it; it's a surprise for my husband.

ELLEN. Oh, yes, ma'am, I understand. [*She goes out.*]

NORA. It is coming! The dreadful thing is coming, after all. No, no, no, it can never be; it shall not!

[*She goes to HELMER's door and slips the bolt.*]

[*ELLEN opens the hall door for KROGSTAD, and shuts it after him.*]

He wears a traveling-coat, high boots, and a fur cap.]

NORA. [*goes toward him.*] Speak softly; my husband is at home.

KROGSTAD. All right. That's nothing to me.

NORA. What do you want?

KROGSTAD. A little information.

NORA. Be quick, then. What is it?

KROGSTAD. You know I have got my dismissal.

NORA. I couldn't prevent it, Mr. Krogstad. I fought for you to the last, but it was of no use.

KROGSTAD. Does your husband care for you so little? He knows what I can bring upon you, and yet he dares—

NORA. How could you think I should tell him?

KROGSTAD. Well, as a matter of fact, I didn't think it. It wasn't like my friend Torvald Helmer to show so much courage—

NORA. Mr. Krogstad, be good enough to speak respectfully of my husband.

KROGSTAD. Certainly, with all due respect. But since you are so anxious to keep the matter secret, I suppose you are a little clearer than yesterday as to what you have done.

NORA. Clearer than you could ever make me.

KROGSTAD. Yes, such a bad lawyer as I—

NORA. What is it you want?

KROGSTAD. Only to see how you are getting on, Mrs. Helmer. I've been thinking about you all day. Even a mere money-lender, a gutter-journalist, a—in short, a creature like me—has a little bit of what people call feeling.

NORA. Then show it; think of my little children.

KROGSTAD. Did you and your husband think of mine? But enough of that. I only wanted to tell you that you needn't take this matter too seriously. I shall not lodge any information, for the present.

NORA. No, surely not. I knew you wouldn't.

KROGSTAD. The whole thing can be settled quite amicably. Nobody need know. It can remain among us three.

NORA. My husband must never know.

KROGSTAD. How can you prevent it? Can you pay off the balance?

NORA. No, not at once.

KROGSTAD. Or have you any means of raising the money in the next few days?

NORA. None—that I will make use of.

KROGSTAD. And if you had, it would not help you now. If you offered me ever so much money down, you should not get back your I O U.

NORA. Tell me what you want to do with it.

KROGSTAD. I only want to keep it—to have it in my possession. No outsider shall hear anything of it. So, if you have any desperate scheme in your head—

NORA. What if I have?

KROGSTAD. If you should think of leaving your husband and children—

NORA. What if I do?

KROGSTAD. Or if you should think of—something worse—

NORA. How do you know that?

KROGSTAD. Put all that out of your head.

NORA. How did you know what I had in my mind?

KROGSTAD. Most of us think of *that* at first. I thought of it, too; but I hadn't the courage—

NORA. [*tonelessly.*] Nor I.

KROGSTAD. [*relieved.*] No, one hasn't. You haven't the courage either, have you?

NORA. I haven't, I haven't.

KROGSTAD. Besides, it would be very foolish.—Just one domestic storm, and it's all over. I have a letter in my pocket for your husband—

NORA. Telling him everything?

KROGSTAD. Sparing you as much as possible.

NORA. [*quickly.*] He must never read that letter. Tear it up. I will manage to get the money somehow—

KROGSTAD. Pardon me, Mrs. Helmer, but I believe I told you—

NORA. Oh, I'm not talking about the money I owe you. Tell me how much you demand from my husband—I will get it.

KROGSTAD. I demand no money from your husband.

NORA. What do you demand, then?

KROGSTAD. I will tell you. I want to regain my footing in the world. I want to rise; and your husband shall help me to do it. For the last eighteen months my record has been spotless; I have been in bitter need all the time; but I was content to fight my way up, step by step. Now, I've been thrust down again, and I will not be satisfied with merely being reinstated as a matter of grace. I want to rise, I tell you. I must get into the Bank again, in a higher position than before. Your husband shall create a place on purpose for me—

NORA. He will never do that!

KROGSTAD. He will do it; I know him—he won't dare to show fight! And when he and I are together there, you shall soon see! Before a year is out

I shall be the manager's right hand. It won't be Torvald Helmer, but Nils Krogstad, that manages the Joint Stock Bank.

NORA. That shall never be.

KROGSTAD. Perhaps you will—?

NORA. Now I have the courage for it.

KROGSTAD. Oh, you don't frighten me! A sensitive, petted creature like you—

NORA. You shall see, you shall see!

KROGSTAD. Under the ice, perhaps? Down into the cold, black water? And next spring to come up again, ugly, hairless, unrecognizable—

NORA. You can't terrify me.

KROGSTAD. Nor you me. People don't do that sort of thing, Mrs. Helmer. And, after all, what would be the use of it? I have your husband in my pocket, all the same.

NORA. Afterwards? When I am no longer—?

KROGSTAD. You forget, your reputation remains in my hands! [NORA stands speechless and looks at him.] Well, now you are prepared. Do nothing foolish. As soon as Helmer has received my letter, I shall expect to hear from him. And remember that it is your husband himself who has forced me back again into such paths. That I will never forgive him. Good-bye, Mrs. Helmer.

[Goes out through the hall.

NORA hurries to the door, opens it a little and listens.]

NORA. He's going. He's not putting the letter into the box. No, no, it would be impossible; [opens the door further and further.] What's that. He's standing still; not going downstairs. Has he changed his mind? Is he—? [a letter falls into the box; KROGSTAD's footsteps are heard gradually receding down the stair; NORA utters a suppressed shriek, and rushes forward towards the sofa-table; pause.] In the letter-box! [slips shrinkingly up to the hall door.] There it lies. —Torvald, Torvald—now we are lost!

[MRS. LINDEN enters from the left with the costume.]

MRS. LIND. There, I think it's all right now. Shall we just try it on?

NORA. [hoarsely and softly.] Christina, come here.

MRS. LIND. [throws down the dress on the sofa.] What's the matter? You look quite distracted.

NORA. Come here. Do you see that letter? There, see,—through the glass of the letter-box.

MRS. LIND. Yes, yes, I see it.

NORA. That letter is from Krogstad—

MRS. LIND. Nora—it was Krogstad who lent you the money.

NORA. Yes; and now Torvald will know everything.

MRS. LIND. Believe me, Nora, it's the best thing for both of you.

NORA. You don't know all yet. I have forged a name—

MRS. LIND. Good Heavens!

NORA. Now, listen to me, Christina; you shall bear me witness—

MRS. LIND. How "witness"? What am I to—

NORA. If I should go out of my mind—it might easily happen—

MRS. LIND. Nora!

NORA. Or if anything else should happen to me—so that I couldn't be here—!

MRS. LIND. Nora, Nora, you're quite beside yourself!

NORA. In case any one wanted to take it all upon himself—the whole blame—you understand.

MRS. LIND. Yes, yes; but how can you think—?

NORA. You shall bear witness that it's not true, Christina. I'm not out of my mind at all; I know quite well what I'm saying; and I tell you nobody else knew anything about it; I did the whole thing, I myself. Remember that.

MRS. LIND. I shall remember. But I don't understand what you mean—

NORA. Oh, how should you? It's the miracle coming to pass.

MRS. LIND. The miracle?

NORA. Yes, the miracle. But it's so terrible, Christina; it mustn't happen for all the world.

MRS. LIND. I shall go straight to Krogstad and talk to him.

NORA. Don't; he'll do you some harm.

MRS. LIND. Once he would have done anything for me.

NORA. He?

MRS. LIND. Where does he live?

NORA. Oh, how can I tell?— Yes— [*feels in her pocket.*] Here's his card. But the letter, the letter—!

HELM. [*knocking outside.*] Nora!

NORA. [*shrieks in terror.*] Oh, what is it? What do you want?

HELM. Well, well, don't be frightened. We're not coming in; you've bolted the door. Are you trying on your dress?

NORA. Yes, yes, I'm trying it on. It suits me so well, Torvald.

MRS. LIND. [*who has read the card.*] Why, he lives close by here.

NORA. Yes, but it's no use now. We are lost. The letter is there in the box.

MRS. LIND. And your husband has the key?

NORA. Always.

MRS. LIND. Krogstad must demand his letter back, unread. He must find some pretext—

NORA. But this is the very time when Torvald generally—

MRS. LIND. Prevent him. Keep him occupied. I shall come back as quickly as I can.

[*She goes out hastily by the hall door.*]

NORA. [*opens HELMER's door and peeps in.*] Torvald!

HELM. Well, may one come into one's own room again at last? Come, Rank, we'll have a look—[*in the doorway.*] But how's this?

NORA. What, Torvald, dear?

HELM. Rank led me to expect a grand transformation.

RANK. [*in the doorway.*] So I understood. I suppose I was mistaken.

NORA. No, no one shall see me in my glory till to-morrow evening.

HELM. Why, Nora, dear, you look

so tired. Have you been practicing too hard.

NORA. No, I haven't practiced at all yet.

HELM. But you'll have to—

NORA. Oh, yes, I must, I must! But, Torvald, I can't get on at all without your help. I've forgotten everything.

HELM. Oh, we shall soon freshen it up again.

NORA. Yes, do help me, Torvald. You must promise me—Oh, I'm so nervous about it. Before so many people—This evening you must give yourself entirely to me. You mustn't do a stroke of work; you mustn't even touch a pen. Do promise, Torvald, dear!

HELM. I promise. All this evening I shall be your slave. Little helpless thing—! But, by the bye, I must just— [*Going to hall door.*]

NORA. What do you want there?

HELM. Only to see if there are any letters.

NORA. No, no, don't do that, Torvald.

HELM. Why not?

NORA. Torvald, I beg you not to. There are none there.

HELM. Let me just see. [*is going; NORA, at the piano, plays the first bars of the tarantella; HELMER, at the door, stops.*] Aha!

NORA. I can't dance to-morrow if I don't rehearse with you first.

HELM. [*going to her.*] Are you really so nervous, dear Nora?

NORA. Yes, dreadfully! Let me rehearse at once. We have time before dinner. Oh, do sit down and play for me, Torvald, dear; direct me and put me right, as you used to do.

HELM. With all the pleasure in life, since you wish it.

[*Sits at piano. NORA snatches the tambourine out of the box, and hurriedly drapes herself in a long parti-colored shawl; then, with a bound, stands in the middle of the floor.*]

NORA. Now, play for me! Now I'll dance!

[HELMER plays and NORA dances. RANK stands at the piano behind HELMER and looks on.]

HELM. [playing.] Slower! Slower!

NORA. Can't do it slower!

HELM. Not so violently, Nora.

NORA. I must! I must!

HELM. [stops.] No, no, Nora,—that will never do.

NORA. [laughs and swings her tambourine.] Didn't I tell you so!

RANK. Let me play for her.

HELM. [rising.] Yes, do,—then I can direct her better.

[RANK sits down to the piano and plays; NORA dances more and more wildly. HELMER stands by the stove and addresses frequent corrections to her; she seems not to hear. Her hair breaks loose, and falls over her shoulders. She does not notice it, but goes on dancing.]

[MRS. LINDEN enters and stands spellbound in the doorway.]

MRS. LIND. Ah—!

NORA. [dancing.] We're having such fun here, Christina!

HELM. Why, Nora, dear, you're dancing as if it were a matter of life and death.

NORA. So it is.

HELM. Rank, stop! This is the merest madness. Stop, I say! [RANK stops playing, and NORA comes to a sudden standstill; HELMER goes toward her.] I couldn't have believed it. You've positively forgotten all I taught you.

NORA. [throws the tambourine away.] You see for yourself.

HELM. You really do want teaching.

NORA. Yes, you see how much I need it. You must practice with me up to the last moment. Will you promise me, Torvald?

HELM. Certainly, certainly.

NORA. Neither to-day nor to-morrow must you think of anything but me. You mustn't open a single letter—mustn't look at the letter-box.

HELM. Ah, you're still afraid of that man—

NORA. Oh, yes, yes, I am.

HELM. Nora, I can see it in your face—there's a letter from him in the box.

NORA. I don't know, I believe so. But you're not to read anything now; nothing ugly must come between us until all is over.

RANK. [softly, to HELMER.] You mustn't contradict her.

HELM. [putting his arm around her.] The child shall have her own way. But to-morrow night, when the dance is over—

NORA. Then you shall be free.

[ELLEN appears in the doorway, right.]

ELLEN. Dinner is on the table, ma'am.

NORA. We'll have some champagne, Ellen.

ELLEN. Yes, ma'am. [Goes out.]

HELM. Dear me! Quite a banquet.

NORA. Yes, and we'll keep it up till morning. [calling out.] And macaroons, Ellen,—plenty,—just this once.

HELM. [seizing her hand.] Come, come, don't let us have this wild excitement! Be my own little lark again.

NORA. Oh, yes, I will. But now go into the dining-room; and you, too, Doctor Rank. Christina, you must help me to do up my hair.

RANK. [softly, as they go.] There's nothing in the wind? Nothing—I mean?

HELM. Oh, no, nothing of the kind. It's merely this babyish anxiety I was telling you about.

[They go out to the right.]

NORA. Well?

MRS. LIND. He's gone out of town.

NORA. I saw it in your face.

MRS. LIND. He comes back to-morrow evening. I left a note for him.

NORA. You shouldn't have done that. Things must take their course. After all, there's something glorious in waiting for the miracle.

MRS. LIND. What is it you're waiting for?

NORA. Oh, you can't understand. Go to them in the dining-room; I shall come in a moment.

[MRS. LINDEN goes into the dining-room. NORA stands for a moment as though collecting her thoughts; then looks at her watch.]

Five. Seven hours till midnight. Then twenty-four hours till the next midnight. Then the tarantella will be over. Twenty-four and seven? Thirty-one hours to live.

[HELMER appears at the door, right.]

HELM. What has become of my little lark?

NORA. [runs to him with open arms.] Here she is!

ACT III

The same room. The table, with the chairs around it, in the middle. A lighted lamp on the table. The door to the hall stands open. Dance music is heard from the floor above.

[MRS. LINDEN sits by the table and absently turns the pages of a book. She tries to read, but seems unable to fix her attention; she frequently listens and looks anxiously toward the hall door.]

MRS. LINDEN. [looks at her watch.] Not here yet; and the time is nearly up. If only he hasn't—[listens again.] Ah, there he is. [she goes into the hall and cautiously opens the outer door; soft footsteps are heard on the stairs; she whispers.] Come in; there is no one here.

KROGSTAD. [in the doorway.] I found a note from you at my house. What does it mean?

MRS. LIND. I must speak to you.

KROGSTAD. Indeed? And in this house?

MRS. LIND. I could not see you at my rooms. They have no separate entrance. Come in; we are quite alone.

The servants are asleep; and the Helmers are at the ball upstairs.

KROGSTAD. [coming into the room.] Ah! So the Helmers are dancing this evening? Really?

MRS. LIND. Yes. Why not?

KROGSTAD. Quite right. Why not?

MRS. LIND. And now, let us talk a little.

KROGSTAD. Have we two anything to say to each other?

MRS. LIND. A great deal.

KROGSTAD. I should not have thought so.

MRS. LIND. Because you have never really understood me.

KROGSTAD. What was there to understand? The most natural thing in the world—a heartless woman throws a man over when a better match offers.

MRS. LIND. Do you really think me so heartless? Do you think I broke with you lightly?

KROGSTAD. Did you not?

MRS. LIND. Do you really think so?

KROGSTAD. If not, why did you write me that letter?

MRS. LIND. Was it not best? Since I had to break with you, was it not right that I should try to put an end to all that you felt for me?

KROGSTAD. [clenching his hands together.] So that was it? And all this—for the sake of money!

MRS. LIND. You ought not to forget that I had a helpless mother and two little brothers. We could not wait for you, Nils, as your prospects then stood.

KROGSTAD. Perhaps not; but you had no right to cast me off for the sake of others; whoever the others might be.

MRS. LIND. I don't know. I have often asked myself whether I had the right.

KROGSTAD. [more softly.] When I had lost you, I seemed to have no firm ground left under my feet. Look at me now. I am a shipwrecked man clinging to a spar.

MRS. LIND. Rescue may be at hand.

KROGSTAD. It was at hand; but then you came and stood in the way.

MRS. LIND. Without my knowledge,

Nils. I did not know till to-day that it was you I was to replace in the Bank.

KROGSTAD. Well, I take your word for it. But now that you do know, do you mean to give way?

MRS. LIND. No; for that would not help you in the least.

KROGSTAD. Oh, help, help—I I should do it whether or no.

MRS. LIND. I have learned prudence. Life and bitter necessity have schooled me.

KROGSTAD. And life has taught me not to trust fine speeches.

MRS. LIND. Then life has taught you a very sensible thing. But deeds you *will* trust?

KROGSTAD. What do you mean?

MRS. LIND. You said you were a shipwrecked man, clinging to a spar.

KROGSTAD. I have good reason to say so.

MRS. LIND. I, too, am shipwrecked, and clinging to a spar. I have no one to mourn for, no one to care for.

KROGSTAD. You made your own choice.

MRS. LIND. No choice was left me.

KROGSTAD. Well, what then?

MRS. LIND. Nils, how if we two shipwrecked people could join hands?

KROGSTAD. What!

MRS. LIND. Two on a raft have a better chance than if each clings to a separate spar.

KROGSTAD. Christina!

MRS. LIND. What do you think brought me to town?

KROGSTAD. Had you any thought for me?

MRS. LIND. I must have work or I can't bear to live. All my life, as long as I can remember, I have worked; work has been my one great joy. Now I stand quite alone in the world, aimless and forlorn. There is no happiness in working for one's self. Nils, give me somebody and something to work for.

KROGSTAD. I cannot believe in all this. It is simply a woman's romantic craving for self-sacrifice.

MRS. LIND. Have you ever found me romantic?

KROGSTAD. Would you really—? Tell me: do you know all my past?

MRS. LIND. Yes.

KROGSTAD. And do you know what people say of me?

MRS. LIND. Did you not say just now that with me you could have been another man?

KROGSTAD. I am sure of it.

MRS. LIND. Is it too late?

KROGSTAD. Christina, do you know what you are doing? Yes, you do; I see it in your face. Have you the courage, then—?

MRS. LIND. I need some one to be a mother to, and your children need a mother. You need me, and I—I need you. Nils, I believe in your better self. With you I fear nothing.

KROGSTAD. [*seizing her hands.*] Thank you—thank you, Christina. Now I shall make others see me as you do.—Ah, I forgot—

MRS. LIND. [*listening.*] Hush! The *tarantella*! Go! Go!

KROGSTAD. Why? What is it?

MRS. LIND. Don't you hear the dancing overhead? As soon as that is over they will be here.

KROGSTAD. Oh, yes, I shall go. Nothing will come of this, after all. Of course, you don't know the step I have taken against the Helmers.

MRS. LIND. Yes, Nils, I do know.

KROGSTAD. And yet you have the courage to—?

MRS. LIND. I know to what lengths despair can drive a man.

KROGSTAD. Oh, if I could only undo it!

MRS. LIND. You could. Your letter is still in the box.

KROGSTAD. Are you sure?

MRS. LIND. Yes; but—

KROGSTAD. [*looking to her searchingly.*] Is that what it all means? You want to save your friend at any price. Say it out—is that your idea?

MRS. LIND. Nils, a woman who has once sold herself for the sake of others, does not do so again.

KROGSTAD. I shall demand my letter back again.

MRS. LIND. No, no.

KROGSTAD. Yes, of course. I shall wait till Helmer comes; I shall tell him to give it back to me—that it's only about my dismissal—that I don't want it read—

MRS. LIND. No, Nils, you must not recall the letter.

KROGSTAD. But tell me, wasn't that just why you got me to come here?

MRS. LIND. Yes, in my first alarm. But a day has passed since then, and in that day I have seen incredible things in this house. Helmer must know everything; there must be an end to this unhappy secret. These two must come to a full understanding. They must have done with all these shifts and subterfuges.

KROGSTAD. Very well, if you like to risk it. But *one* thing I can do, and at once—

MRS. LIND. [*listening.*] Make haste! Go, go! The dance is over; we're not safe another moment.

KROGSTAD. I shall wait for you in the street.

MRS. LIND. Yes, do; you must see me home.

KROGSTAD. I never was so happy in all my life!

[*KROGSTAD goes out by the outer door. The door between the room and the hall remains open.*]

MRS. LIND. [*arranging the room and getting her outdoor things together.*] What a change! What a change! To have some one to work for, to live for; a home to make happy! Well, it shall not be my fault if I fail.—I wish they would come.—[*listens.*] Ah, there they are! I must get my things on.

[*Takes bonnet and cloak.*]

[*HELMER'S and NORA'S voices are heard outside, a key is turned in the lock, and HELMER drags NORA almost by force into the hall. She wears the Italian costume with a large black shawl over it. He is in evening dress and wears a black domino, open.*]

NORA. [*struggling with him in the doorway.*] No, no, no! I won't go in!

I want to go upstairs again; I don't want to leave so early!

HELM. But, my dearest girl—!

NORA. Oh, please, please, Torvald, I beseech you—only one hour more!

HELM. Not one minute more, Nora, dear; you know what we agreed. Come, come in; you're catching cold here.

[*He leads her gently into the room in spite of her resistance.*]

MRS. LIND. Good-evening.

NORA. Christina!

HELM. What, Mrs. Linden! You here so late?

MRS. LIND. Yes, I ought to apologize. I did so want to see Nora in her costume.

NORA. Have you been sitting here waiting for me?

MRS. LIND. Yes; unfortunately, I came too late. You had gone upstairs already, and I felt I couldn't go away without seeing you.

HELM. [*taking NORA'S shawl off.*] Well, then, just look at her! I assure you she's worth it. Isn't she lovely, Mrs. Linden?

MRS. LIND. Yes, I must say—

HELM. Isn't she exquisite? Every one said so. But she's dreadfully obstinate, dear little creature. What's to be done with her? Just think, I had almost to force her away.

NORA. Oh, Torvald, you'll be sorry some day that you didn't let me stay, if only for one half-hour more.

HELM. There! You hear her, Mrs. Linden? She dances her *tarantella* with wild applause, and well she deserved it, I must say,—though there was, perhaps, a little too much nature in her rendering of the idea,—more than was, strictly speaking, artistic. But never mind—the point is, she made a great success, a tremendous success. Was I to let her remain after that—to weaken the impression? Not if I know it. I took my sweet little Capri girl—my capricious little Capri girl, I might say—under my arm; a rapid turn round the room, a curtsy to all sides, and—as they say in novels—the lovely apparition vanished! An exit should always

be effective, Mrs. Linden; but I can't get Nora to see it. By Jove! it's warm here. [*throws his domino on a chair and opens the door to his room.*] What! No light there? Oh, of course. Excuse me—

[*Goes in and lights candles.*]

NORA. [*whispers breathlessly.*] Well?

MRS. LIND. [*softly.*] I've spoken to him.

NORA. And—?

MRS. LIND. Nora—you must tell your husband everything—

NORA. [*tonelessly.*] I knew it!

MRS. LIND. You have nothing to fear from Krogstad; but you must speak out.

NORA. I shall not speak!

MRS. LIND. Then the letter will.

NORA. Thank you, Christina. Now I know what I have to do. Hush—!

HELM. [*coming back.*] Well, Mrs. Linden, have you admired her?

MRS. LIND. Yes; and now I must say good-night.

HELM. What, already? Does this knitting belong to you?

MRS. LIND. [*takes it.*] Yes, thanks; I was nearly forgetting it.

HELM. Then you do knit?

MRS. LIND. Yes.

HELM. Do you know, you ought to embroider instead?

MRS. LIND. Indeed! Why?

HELM. Because it's so much prettier. Look, now! You hold the embroidery in the left hand, so, and then work the needle with the right hand, in a long, graceful curve—don't you?

MRS. LIND. Yes, I suppose so.

HELM. But knitting is always ugly. Just look—your arms close to your sides, and the needles going up and down—there's something Chinese about it.—They really gave us splendid champagne to-night.

MRS. LIND. Well, good-night, Nora, and don't be obstinate any more.

HELM. Well said, Mrs. Linden!

MRS. LIND. Good-night, Mr. Helmer.

HELM. [*accompanying her to the door.*] Good-night, good-night; I hope you'll get safely home. I should be

glad to—but you have such a short way to go. Good-night, good-night. [*she goes; HELMER shuts the door after her and comes forward again.*] At last we've got rid of her; she's a terrible bore.

NORA. Aren't you very tired, Torvald?

HELM. No, not in the least.

NORA. Nor sleepy?

HELM. Not a bit. I feel particularly lively. But you? You do look tired and sleepy.

NORA. Yes, very tired. I shall soon sleep now.

HELM. There, you see. I was right, after all, not to let you stay longer.

NORA. Oh, everything you do is right.

HELM. [*kissing her forehead.*] Now my lark is speaking like a reasonable being. Did you notice how jolly Rank was this evening?

NORA. Indeed? Was he? I had no chance of speaking to him.

HELM. Nor I, much; but I haven't seen him in such good spirits for a long time. [*looks at NORA a little, then comes nearer her.*] It's splendid to be back in our own home, to be quite alone together!—Oh, you enchanting creature.

NORA. Don't look at me in that way, Torvald!

HELM. I am not to look at my dearest treasure?—at all the loveliness that is mine, mine only, wholly and entirely mine?

NORA. [*going to the other side of the table.*] You mustn't say these things to me this evening.

HELM. [*following.*] I see you have the *tarantella* still in your blood—and that makes you all the more enticing. Listen! the other people are going now. [*more softly.*] Nora—soon the whole house will be still.

NORA. Yes, I hope so.

HELM. Yes, don't you, Nora, darling? When we are among strangers, do you know why I speak so little to you, and keep so far away, and only steal a glance at you now and then—do you know why I do it? Be-

cause I am fancying that we love each other in secret, that I am secretly betrothed to you, and that no one dreams that there is anything between us.

NORA. Yes, yes, yes. I know all your thoughts are with me.

HELM. And then, when the time comes to go, and I put the shawl about your smooth, soft shoulders, and this glorious neck of yours, I imagine you are my bride, that our marriage is just over, that I am bringing you for the first time to my home—that I am alone with you for the first time—quite alone with you, in your trembling loveliness! All this evening I have been longing for you, and you only. When I watched you swaying and whirling in the *tarantella*—my blood boiled—I could endure it no longer; and that's why I made you come home with me so early—

NORA. Go, now, Torvald! Go away from me. I won't have all this.

HELM. What do you mean? Ah, I see you're teasing me, little Nora! Won't—won't! Am I not your husband—? [*A knock at the outer door.*]

NORA. [*starts.*] Did you hear—?

HELM. [*going toward the hall.*] Who's there?

RANK. [*outside.*] It is I; may I come in for a moment?

HELM. [*in a low tone, annoyed.*] Oh! What can he want just now? [*aloud.*] Wait a moment. [*opens door.*] Come, it's nice of you to look in.

RANK. I thought I heard your voice, and that put it into my head. [*looks round.*] Ah, this dear old place! How cozy you two are here!

HELM. You seemed to find it pleasant enough upstairs, too.

RANK. Exceedingly. Why not? Why shouldn't one take one's share of everything in this world? All one can, at least, and as long as one can. The wine was splendid—

HELM. Especially the champagne.

RANK. Did you notice it? It's incredible the quantity I contrived to get down.

NORA. Torvald drank plenty of champagne, too.

RANK. Did he?

NORA. Yes, and it always put him in such spirits.

RANK. Well, why shouldn't one have a jolly evening after a well-spent day?

HELM. Well-spent! Well, I haven't much to boast of in that respect.

RANK. [*slapping him on the shoulder.*] But I *have*, don't you see?

NORA. I suppose you have been engaged in a scientific investigation, Doctor Rank?

RANK. Quite right.

HELM. Bless me! Little Nora talking about scientific investigations!

NORA. Am I to congratulate you on the result?

RANK. By all means.

NORA. It was good, then?

RANK. The best possible, both for doctor and patient—certainty.

NORA. [*quickly and searchingly.*] Certainty?

RANK. Absolute certainty. Wasn't I right to enjoy myself after that?

NORA. Yes, quite right, Doctor Rank.

HELM. And so say I, provided you don't have to pay for it tomorrow.

RANK. Well, in this life nothing is to be had for nothing.

NORA. Doctor Rank—I'm sure you are very fond of masquerades?

RANK. Yes, when there are plenty of amusing disguises—

NORA. Tell me, what shall we two be at our next masquerade?

HELM. Little featherbrain! Thinking of your next already!

RANK. We two? I'll tell you. You must go as a good fairy.

HELM. Ah, but what costume would indicate *that*?

RANK. She has simply to wear her everyday dress.

HELM. Capital! But don't you know what you will be yourself?

RANK. Yes, my dear friend, I am perfectly clear upon that point.

HELM. Well?

RANK. At the next masquerade I shall be invisible.

HELM. What a comical idea!

RANK. There's a big black hat—haven't you heard of the invisible hat? It comes down all over you, and then no one can see you.

HELM. [*with a suppressed smile.*] No, you're right there.

RANK. But I'm quite forgetting what I came for. Helmer, give me a cigar—one of the dark Havanas.

HELM. With the greatest pleasure.
[*Hands cigar-case.*]

RANK. [*takes one and cuts the end off.*] Thank you.

NORA. [*striking a wax match.*] Let me give you a light.

RANK. A thousand thanks. [*she holds the match; he lights his cigar at it.*] And now, good-bye!

HELM. Good-bye, good-bye, my dear fellow.

NORA. Sleep well, Doctor Rank.

RANK. Thanks for the wish.

NORA. Wish me the same.

RANK. You? Very well, since you ask me—sleep well. And thanks for the light.

[*He nods to them both and goes out.*]

HELM. [*in an undertone.*] He's been drinking a good deal.

NORA. [*absently.*] I dare say.
[*HELMER takes his bunch of keys from his pocket and goes into the hall.*]
Torvald, what are you doing there?

HELM. I must empty the letter-box; it's quite full; there will be no room for the newspapers to-morrow morning.

NORA. Are you going to work to-night?

HELM. You know very well I am not.—Why, how is this? Some one has been at the lock.

NORA. The lock—?

HELM. I'm sure of it. What does it mean? I can't think that the servants—?. Here's a broken hairpin. Nora, it's one of yours.

NORA. [*quickly.*] It must have been the children—

HELM. Then you must break them of such tricks.—There! At last I've got it open. [*takes contents out and*

calls into the kitchen.] Ellen!—Ellen, just put the hall door lamp out.

[*He returns with letters in his hand, and shuts the inner door.*]

Just see how they've accumulated.
[*turning them over.*] Why, what's this?

NORA. [*at the window.*] The letter! Oh, no, no, Torvald!

HELM. Two visiting cards—from Rank.

NORA. From Doctor Rank?

HELM. [*looking at them.*] Doctor Rank. They were on the top. He must just have put them in.

NORA. Is there anything on them?

HELM. There's a black cross over the name. Look at it. What an unpleasant idea! It looks just as if he were announcing his own death.

NORA. So he is.

HELM. What! Do you know anything? Has he told you anything?

NORA. Yes. These cards mean that he has taken his last leave of us. He is going to shut himself up and die.

HELM. Poor fellow! Of course, I knew we couldn't hope to keep him long. But so soon—! And to go and creep into his lair like a wounded animal—

NORA. When we *must* go, it is best to go silently. Don't you think so, Torvald?

HELM. [*walking up and down.*] He had so grown into our lives, I can't realize that he is gone. He and his sufferings and his loneliness formed a sort of cloudy background to the sunshine of our happiness.—Well, perhaps it's best as it is—at any rate, for him.
[*stands still.*] And perhaps for us, too, Nora. Now we two are thrown entirely upon each other. [*takes her in his arms.*] My darling wife! I feel as if I could never hold you close enough. Do you know, Nora, I often wish some danger might threaten you, that I might risk body and soul, and everything, everything, for your dear sake.

NORA. [*tears herself from him and says firmly.*] Now you shall read your letters, Torvald.

HELM. No, no; not to-night. I want to be with you, my sweet wife.

NORA. With the thought of your dying friend—?

HELM. You are right. This has shaken us both. Unloveliness has come between us—thoughts of death and decay. We must seek to cast them off. Till then—we will remain apart.

NORA. [*her arms round his neck.*] Torvald! Good-night! good-night!

HELM. [*kissing her forehead.*] Good-night, my little song-bird. Sleep well, Nora. Now I shall go and read my letters.

[*He goes with the letters in his hand into his room and shuts the door.*]

NORA. [*with wild eyes, gropes about her, seizes HELMER'S domino, throws it round her, and whispers quickly, hoarsely, and brokenly.*] Never to see him again. Never, never, never. [*throws her shawl over her head.*] Never to see the children again. Never, never.—Oh, that black, icy water! Oh, that bottomless—! If it were only over! Now he has it; he's reading it. Oh, no, no, no, not yet. Torvald, good-bye—! Good-bye, my little ones—!

[*She is rushing out by the hall; at the same moment HELMER flings his door open, and stands there with an open letter in his hand.*]

HELM. Nora!

NORA. [*shrieks.*] Ah—!

HELM. What is this? Do you know what is in this letter?

NORA. Yes, I know. Let me go! Let me go! Let me pass!

HELM. [*holds her back.*] Where do you want to go?

NORA. [*tries to break away from him.*] You shall not save me, Torvald.

HELM. [*falling back.*] True! Is what he writes true? No, no, it is impossible that this can be true.

NORA. It is true. I have loved you beyond all else in the world.

HELM. Pshaw—no silly evasions!

NORA. [*a step nearer him.*] Torvald—!

HELM. Wretched woman—what have you done!

NORA. Let me go—you shall not save me! You shall not take my guilt upon yourself!

HELM. I don't want any melodramatic airs. [*locks the outer door.*] Here you shall stay and give an account of yourself. Do you understand what you have done? Answer! Do you understand it?

NORA. [*looks at him fixedly, and says with a stiffening expression.*] Yes; now I begin fully to understand it.

HELM. [*walking up and down.*] Oh, what an awful awakening! During all these eight years—she who was my pride and my joy—a hypocrite, a liar—worse, worse—a criminal. Oh, the unfathomable hideousness of it all! Ugh! Ugh!

[*NORA says nothing and continues to look fixedly at him.*]

I ought to have known how it would be. I ought to have foreseen it. All your father's want of principle—be silent!—all your father's want of principle you have inherited—no religion, no morality, no sense of duty. How I am punished for screening him! I did it for your sake; and you reward me like this.

NORA. Yes—like this.

HELM. You have destroyed my whole happiness. You have ruined my future. Oh, it's frightful to think of! I am in the power of a scoundrel; he can do whatever he pleases with me, demand whatever he chooses; he can domineer over me as much as he likes, and I must submit. And all this disaster and ruin is brought upon me by an unprincipled woman!

NORA. When I am out of the world, you will be free.

HELM. Oh, no fine phrases. Your father, too, was always ready with them. What good would it do me, if you were "out of the world," as you say? No good whatever! He can publish the story all the same; I might even be suspected of collusion. People will think I was at the bottom of it all and egged you on. And for all this I

have you to thank—you whom I have done nothing but pet and spoil during our whole married life. Do you understand now what you have done to me?

NORA. [*with cold calmness.*] Yes.

HELM. The thing is so incredible, I can't grasp it. But we must come to an understanding. Take that shawl off. Take it off, I say! I must try to pacify him in one way or another—the matter must be hushed up, cost what it may.—As for you and me, we must make no outward change in our way of life—no outward change, you understand. Of course, you will continue to live here. But the children cannot be left in your care. I dare not trust them to you.—Oh, to have to say this to one I have loved so tenderly—whom I still—! But that must be a thing of the past. Henceforward there can be no question of happiness, but merely of saving the ruins, the shreds, the show— [*a ring; HELMER starts.*] What's that? So late! Can it be the worst? Can he—? Hide yourself, Nora; say you are ill.

[NORA stands motionless.

HELMER goes to the door and opens it.]

ELLEN. [*half dressed, in the hall.*] Here is a letter for you, ma'am.

HELM. Give it to me. [*seizes the letter and shuts the door.*] Yes, from him. You shall not have it. I shall read it.

NORA. Read it!

HELM. [*by the lamp.*] I have hardly the courage to. We may both be lost, both you and I. Ah! I must know. [*hastily tears the letter open; reads a few lines, looks at an enclosure; with a cry of joy.*] Nora!

[NORA looks inquiringly at him.]

NORA!—Oh, I must read it again.—Yes, yes, it is so. I am saved! Nora, I am saved!

NORA. And I?

HELM. You, too, of course; we are both saved, both of us. Look here—he sends you back your promissory note. He writes that he regrets and apologizes—that a happy turn in his life—Oh, what matter what he writes? We are saved, Nora! No one can harm you.

Oh, Nora, Nora; but first to get rid of this hateful thing. I'll just see— [*glances at the I O U.*] No, I will not look at it; the whole thing shall be nothing but a dream to me. [*tears the I O U and both letters in pieces; throws them into the fire and watches them burn.*] There! it's gone!—He said that ever since Christmas Eve—Oh, Nora, they must have been three terrible days for you!

NORA. I have fought a hard fight for the last three days.

HELM. And in your agony you saw no other outlet but— No; we won't think of that horror. We will only rejoice and repeat—it's over, all over! Don't you hear, Nora? You don't seem able to grasp it. Yes, it's over. What is this set look on your face? Oh, my poor Nora, I understand; you cannot believe that I have forgiven you. But I have, Nora; I swear it. I have forgiven everything. I know that what you did was all for love of me.

NORA. That is true.

HELM. You loved me as a wife should love her husband. It was only the means that, in your inexperience, you misjudged. But do you think I love you the less because you cannot do without guidance? No, no. Only lean on me; I will counsel you, and guide you. I should be no true man if this very womanly helplessness did not make you doubly dear in my eyes. You mustn't dwell upon the hard things I said in my first moment of terror, when the world seemed to be tumbling about my ears. I have forgiven you, Nora,—I swear I have forgiven you.

NORA. I thank you for your forgiveness. [*Goes out, to the right.*]

HELM. No, stay—! [*looking through the doorway.*] What are you going to do?

NORA. [*inside.*] To take off my masquerade dress.

HELM. [*in the doorway.*] Yes, do, dear. Try to calm down, and recover your balance, my scared little song-bird. You may rest secure. I have broad wings to shield you. [*walking up and down near the door.*] Oh, how

lovely—how cozy our home is, Nora! Here you are safe; here I can shelter you like a hunted dove whom I have saved from the claws of the hawk. I shall soon bring your poor beating heart to rest; believe me, Nora, very soon. To-morrow all this will seem quite different—everything will be as before. I shall not need to tell you again that I forgive you; you will feel for yourself that it is true. How could you think I could find it in my heart to drive you away, or even so much as to reproach you? Oh, you don't know a true man's heart, Nora. There is something indescribably sweet and soothing to a man in having forgiven his wife—honestly forgiven her, from the bottom of his heart. She becomes his property in a double sense. She is as though born again; she has become, so to speak, at once his wife and his child. That is what you shall henceforth be to me, my bewildered, helpless darling. Don't be troubled about anything, Nora; only open your heart to me, and I will be both will and conscience to you.

[NORA enters in everyday dress.]

Why, what's this? Not gone to bed? You have changed your dress?

NORA. Yes, Torvald; now I have changed my dress.

HELM. But why now, so late—?

NORA. I shall not sleep to-night.

HELM. But, Nora, dear—

NORA. [looking at her watch.] It's not so late yet. Sit down, Torvald; you and I have much to say to each other.

[She sits at one side of the table.]

HELM. Nora—what does this mean? Your cold, set face—

NORA. Sit down. It will take some time. I have much to talk over with you.

[HELMER sits at the other side of the table.]

HELM. You alarm me, Nora. I don't understand you.

NORA. No, that is just it. You don't understand me; and I have never understood you—till to-night. No, don't interrupt. Only listen to what I

say.—We must come to a final settlement, Torvald.

HELM. How do you mean?

NORA. [after a short silence.] Does not one thing strike you as we sit here?

HELM. What should strike me?

NORA. We have been married eight years. Does it not strike you that this is the first time we two, you and I, man and wife, have talked together seriously?

HELM. Seriously! What do you call seriously?

NORA. During eight whole years, and more—ever since the day we first met—we have never exchanged one serious word about serious things.

HELM. Was I always to trouble you with the cares you could not help me to bear?

NORA. I am not talking of cares. I say that we have never yet set ourselves seriously to get to the bottom of anything.

HELM. Why, my dearest Nora, what have you to do with serious things?

NORA. There we have it! You have never understood me.—I have had great injustice done me, Torvald; first by father, and then by you.

HELM. What! By your father and me?—By us, who have loved you more than all the world?

NORA. [shaking her head.] You have never loved me. You only thought it amusing to be in love with me.

HELM. Why, Nora, what a thing to say!

NORA. Yes, it is so, Torvald. While I was at home with father, he used to tell me all his opinions, and I held the same opinions. If I had others, I said nothing about them, because he wouldn't have liked it. He used to call me his doll-child, and played with me as I played with my dolls. Then I came to live in your house—

HELM. What an expression to use about our marriage!

NORA. [undisturbed.] I mean I passed from father's hands into yours. You arranged everything according to your taste; and I got the same tastes as you; or I pretended to—I don't know which—both ways, perhaps; sometimes

one and sometimes the other. When I look back on it now, I seem to have been living here like a beggar, from hand to mouth. I lived by performing tricks for you, Torvald. But you would have it so. You and father have done me a great wrong. It is your fault that my life has come to nothing.

HELM. Why, Nora, how unreasonable and ungrateful you are! Have you not been happy here?

NORA. No, never. I thought I was; but I never was.

HELM. Not—not happy!

NORA. No; only merry. And you have always been so kind to me. But our house has been nothing but a play-room. Here I have been your doll-wife, just as at home I used to be papa's doll-child. And the children, in their turn, have been my dolls. I thought it fun when you played with me, just as the children did when I played with them. That has been our marriage, Torvald.

HELM. There is some truth in what you say, exaggerated and overstrained though it be. But henceforth it shall be different. Play-time is over; now comes the time for education.

NORA. Whose education? Mine, or the children's?

HELM. Both, my dear Nora.

NORA. Oh, Torvald, you are not the man to teach me to be a fit wife for you.

HELM. And you can say that?

NORA. And I—how have I prepared myself to educate the children?

HELM. Nora!

NORA. Did you not say yourself, a few minutes ago, you dared not trust them to me?

HELM. In the excitement of the moment! Why should you dwell upon that?

NORA. No—you were perfectly right. That problem is beyond me. There is another to be solved first—I must try to educate myself. You are not the man to help me in that. I must set about it alone. And that is why I am leaving you.

HELM. [*jumping up.*] What—do you mean to say—?

NORA. I must stand quite alone if I am ever to know myself and my surroundings; so I cannot stay with you.

HELM. Nora! Nora!

NORA. I am going at once. I dare say Christina will take me in for to-night—

HELM. You are mad! I shall not allow it! I forbid it!

NORA. It is of no use your forbidding me anything now. I shall take with me what belongs to me. From you I will accept nothing, either now or afterwards.

HELM. What madness this is!

NORA. To-morrow I shall go home—I mean to what was my home. It will be easier for me to find some opening there.

HELM. Oh, in your blind inexperience—

NORA. I must try to *gain* experience, Torvald.

HELM. To forsake your home, your husband, and your children! And you don't consider what the world will say.

NORA. I can pay no heed to that. I only know that I must do it.

HELM. This is monstrous! Can you forsake your holiest duties in this way?

NORA. What do you consider my holiest duties?

HELM. Do I need to tell you that? Your duties to your husband and your children.

NORA. I have other duties equally sacred.

HELM. Impossible! What duties do you mean?

NORA. My duties toward myself.

HELM. Before all else you are a wife and a mother.

NORA. That I no longer believe. I believe that before all else I am a human being, just as much as you are—or at least that I should try to become one. I know that most people agree with you, Torvald, and that they say so in books. But henceforth I can't be satisfied with what most people say, and what is in books. I must think things out for myself, and try to get clear about them.

HELM. Are you not clear about your

place in your own home? Have you not an infallible guide in questions like these? Have you not religion?

NORA. Oh, Torvald, I don't really know what religion is.

HELM. What do you mean?

NORA. I know nothing but what Pastor Hansen told me when I was confirmed. He explained that religion was this and that. When I get away from all this and stand alone, I will look into that matter too. I will see whether what he taught me is right, or, at any rate, whether it is right for me.

HELM. Oh, this is unheard of! And from so young a woman! But if religion cannot keep you right, let me appeal to your conscience—for I suppose you have some moral feeling? Or, answer me: perhaps you have none?

NORA. Well, Torvald, it's not easy to say. I really don't know—I am all at sea about these things. I only know that I think quite differently from you about them. I hear, too, that the laws are different from what I thought; but I can't believe that they can be right. It appears that a woman has no right to spare her dying father, or to save her husband's life! I don't believe that.

HELM. You talk like a child. You don't understand the society in which you live.

NORA. No, I do not. But now I shall try to learn. I must make up my mind which is right—society or I.

HELM. Nora, you are ill; you are feverish; I almost think you are out of your senses.

NORA. I have never felt so much clearness and certainty as to-night.

HELM. You are clear and certain enough to forsake husband and children?

NORA. Yes, I am.

HELM. Then there is only one explanation possible.

NORA. What is that?

HELM. You no longer love me.

NORA. No; that is just it.

HELM. Nora!—Can you say so!

NORA. Oh, I'm so sorry, Torvald;

for you've always been so kind to me. But I can't help it. I do not love you any longer.

HELM. [*mastering himself with difficulty.*] Are you clear and certain on this point too?

NORA. Yes, quite. That is why I will not stay here any longer.

HELM. And can you also make clear to me how I have forfeited your love?

NORA. Yes, I can. It was this evening, when the miracle did not happen; for then I saw you were not the man I had imagined.

HELM. Explain yourself more clearly; I don't understand.

NORA. I have waited so patiently all these eight years; for, of course, I saw clearly enough that miracles don't happen every day. When this crushing blow threatened me, I said to myself so confidently, "Now comes the miracle!" When Krogstad's letter lay in the box, it never for a moment occurred to me that you would think of submitting to that man's conditions. I was convinced that you would say to him, "Make it known to all the world"; and that then—

HELM. Well? When I had given my own wife's name up to disgrace and shame—?

NORA. Then I firmly believed that you would come forward, take everything upon yourself and say, "I am the guilty one."

HELM. Nora—!

NORA. You mean I would never have accepted such a sacrifice? No, certainly not. But what would my assertions have been worth in opposition to yours?—*That* was the miracle that I hoped for and dreaded. And it was to hinder *that* that I wanted to die.

HELM. I would gladly work for you day and night, Nora,—bear sorrow and want for your sake. But no man sacrifices his honor, even for one he loves.

NORA. Millions of women have done so.

HELM. Oh, you think and talk like a silly child.

NORA. Very likely. But you neither think nor talk like the man I can share

my life with. When your terror was over—not for what threatened me, but for yourself—when there was nothing more to fear—then it seemed to you as though nothing had happened. I was your lark again, your doll, just as before—whom you would take twice as much care of in future, because she was so weak and fragile. [*stands up.*] Torvald—in that moment it burst upon me that I had been living here these eight years with a strange man, and had borne him three children.—Oh, I can't bear to think of it! I could tear myself to pieces!

HELM. [*sadly.*] I see it, I see it; an abyss has opened between us.—But, Nora, can it never be filled up?

NORA. As I now am, I am no wife for you.

HELM. I have strength to become another man.

NORA. Perhaps—when your doll is taken away from you.

HELM. To part—to part from you! No, Nora, no; I can't grasp the thought.

NORA. [*going into room on the right.*] The more reason for the thing to happen.

[*She comes back with outdoor things and a small traveling-bag, which she places on a chair.*]

HELM. Nora, Nora, not now! Wait till to-morrow.

NORA. [*putting on cloak.*] I can't spend the night in a strange man's house.

HELM. But can we not live here, as brother and sister—?

NORA. [*fastening her hat.*] You know very well that wouldn't last long. [*puts on the shawl.*] Good-bye, Torvald. No, I won't go to the children. I know they are in better hands than mine. As I now am, I can be nothing to them.

HELM. But some time, Nora—some time—?

NORA. How can I tell? I have no idea what will become of me.

HELM. But you are my wife, now and always!

NORA. Listen, Torvald,—when a wife leaves her husband's house, as I

am doing, I have heard that in the eyes of the law he is free from all duties toward her. At any rate, I release you from all duties. You must not feel yourself bound, any more than I shall. There must be perfect freedom on both sides. There, I give you back your ring. Give me mine.

HELM. That, too?

NORA. That, too.

HELM. Here it is.

NORA. Very well. Now it is all over. I lay the keys here. The servants know about everything in the house—better than I do. To-morrow, when I have started, Christina will come to pack up the things I brought with me from home. I will have them sent after me.

HELM. All over! All over! Nora, will you never think of me again?

NORA. Oh, I shall often think of you, and the children, and this house.

HELM. May I write to you, Nora?

NORA. No—never. You must not.

HELM. But I must send you—

NORA. Nothing, nothing.

HELM. I must help you if you need it.

NORA. No, I say. I take nothing from strangers.

HELM. Nora—can I never be more than a stranger to you?

NORA. [*taking her traveling-bag.*] Oh, Torvald, then the miracle of miracles would have to happen—

HELM. What is the miracle of miracles?

NORA. Both of us would have to change so that—Oh, Torvald, I no longer believe in miracles.

HELM. But I will believe. Tell me! We must so change that—?

NORA. That communion between us shall be a marriage. Good-bye.

[*She goes out by the hall door.*]

HELM. [*sinking into a chair by the door with his face in his hands.*] Nora! Nora! [*he looks round and rises.*] Empty. She is gone. [*a hope springs up in him.*] Ah! The miracle of miracles—?

[*From below is heard the reverberation of a heavy door closing.*]

LADY WINDERMERE'S FAN

OSCAR WILDE

CHARACTERS

LORD WINDERMERE.
LORD DARLINGTON.
LORD AUGUSTUS LORTON.
MR. CECIL GRAHAM.
MR. DUMBY.
MR. HOPPER.
PARKER, *butler*.

LADY WINDERMERE.
THE DUCHESS OF BERWICK.
LADY AGATHA CARLISLE.
LADY PLYMDALE.
LADY JEDBURGH.
LADY STUTTFIELD.
MRS. COWPER-COWPER.
MRS. ERLYNNE.
ROSALIE, *maid*.

ACT I. Morning-Room in LORD WINDERMERE'S House

ACT II. Drawing-Room in LORD WINDERMERE'S House

ACT III. LORD DARLINGTON'S Rooms

ACT IV. Same as Act I

TIME—The Present.

PLACE—London.

The action of the play takes place within twenty-four hours, beginning on a Tuesday afternoon at five o'clock, and ending the next day at 1.30 P.M.

ACT I

Morning-room of LORD WINDERMERE'S house in Carlton House Terrace. Doors c. and R. Bureau with books and papers R. Sofa with small tea-table L. Window opening on to terrace L. Table R.

[LADY WINDERMERE is at table R. arranging roses in a blue bowl.]

[Enter PARKER.]

PARKER. Is your ladyship at home this afternoon?

LADY W. Yes—who has called?

PARKER. Lord Darlington, my lady.

LADY W. [*hesitates for a moment.*] Show him up—and I'm at home to any one who calls.

PARKER. Yes, my lady. [*Exit c.*]

LADY W. It's best for me to see him before to-night. I'm glad he's come.

[Enter PARKER c.]

PARKER. Lord Darlington.

[Enter LORD DARLINGTON, c. *Exit* PARKER.]

LORD D. How do you do, Lady Windermere?

LADY W. How do you do, Lord Darlington? No, I can't shake hands with you. My hands are all wet with these roses. Aren't they lovely? They came up from Selby this morning.

LORD D. They are quite perfect. [*sees a fan lying on the table.*] And what a wonderful fan! May I look at it?

LADY W. Do. Pretty, isn't it! It's got my name on it, and everything. I have only just seen it myself. It's my husband's birthday present to me. You know to-day is my birthday?

LORD D. No? Is it really?

LADY W. Yes; I'm of age to-day. Quite an important day in my life, isn't it? That is why I am giving this party to-night. Do sit down.

[*Still arranging flowers.*]

LORD D. [*sitting down.*] I wish I had known it was your birthday, Lady Windermere. I would have covered the whole street in front of your house with flowers to walk on. They are made for you. [*A short pause.*]

LADY W. Lord Darlington, you annoyed me last night at the Foreign Office. I am afraid you are going to annoy me again.

LORD D. I, Lady Windermere?

[Enter PARKER and FOOTMAN C. with tray and tea-things.]

LADY W. Put it there, Parker. That will do. [*wipes her hands with her pocket-handkerchief, goes to tea-table L. and sits down.*] Won't you come over, Lord Darlington?

[Exit PARKER C.]

LORD D. [*takes chair and goes across L. c.*] I am quite miserable, Lady Windermere. You must tell me what I did. [*Sits down at table L.*]

LADY W. Well, you kept paying me elaborate compliments the whole evening.

LORD D. [*smiling.*] Ah, nowadays we are all of us so hard up, that the only pleasant things to pay *are* compliments. They're the only thing we *can* pay.

LADY W. [*shaking her head.*] No, I am talking very seriously. You mustn't laugh, I am quite serious. I don't like compliments, and I don't see why a man should think he is pleasing a woman enormously when he says to her a whole heap of things that he doesn't mean.

LORD D. Ah, but I did mean them. [*Takes tea which she offers him.*]

LADY W. [*gravely.*] I hope not. I should be sorry to have to quarrel with you, Lord Darlington. I like you very much, you know that. But I shouldn't like you at all if I thought you were what most other men are. Believe me, you are better than most other men, and I sometimes think you pretend to be worse.

LORD D. We all have our little vanities, Lady Windermere.

LADY W. Why do you make that your special one?

[*Still seated at table L.*]

LORD D. [*still seated L. c.*] Oh, nowadays so many conceited people go about Society pretending to be good, that I think it shows a rather sweet and modest disposition to pretend to be bad.

Besides, there is this to be said. If you pretend to be good, the world takes you very seriously. If you pretend to be bad, it doesn't. Such is the astounding stupidity of optimism.

LADY W. Don't you *want* the world to take you seriously then, Lord Darlington?

LORD D. No, not the world. Who are the people the world takes seriously? All the dull people one can think of, from the bishops down to the bores. I should like *you* to take me very seriously, Lady Windermere, *you* more than any one else in life.

LADY W. Why—why me?

LORD D. [*after a slight hesitation.*] Because I think we might be great friends. Let us be great friends. You may want a friend some day.

LADY W. Why do you say that?

LORD D. Oh!—we all want friends at times.

LADY W. I think we're very good friends already, Lord Darlington. We can always remain so as long as you don't—

LORD D. Don't what?

LADY W. Don't spoil it by saying extravagant, silly things to me. You think I am a Puritan, I suppose? Well, I have something of the Puritan in me. I was brought up like that. I am glad of it. My mother died when I was a mere child. I lived always with Lady Julia, my father's eldest sister, you know. She was stern to me, but she taught me, what the world is forgetting, the difference that there is between what is right and what is wrong. *She* allowed of no compromise. *I* allow of none.

LORD D. My dear Lady Windermere!

LADY W. [*leaning back on the sofa.*] You look on me as being behind the age.—Well, I am! I should be sorry to be on the same level as an age like this.

LORD D. You think the age very bad?

LADY W. Yes. Nowadays people seem to look on life as a speculation. It is not a speculation. It is a sacra-

ment. Its ideal is Love. Its purification is sacrifice.

LORD D. [*smiling.*] Oh, anything is better than being sacrificed!

LADY W. [*leaning forward.*] Don't say that.

LORD D. I do say it. I feel it—I know it.

[*Enter PARKER C.*]

PARKER. The men want to know if they are to put the carpets on the terrace for to-night, my lady?

LADY W. You don't think it will rain, Lord Darlington, do you?

LORD D. I won't hear of its raining on your birthday!

LADY W. Tell them to do it at once, Parker.

[*Exit PARKER C.*]

LORD D. [*still seated.*] Do you think then—of course I am only putting an imaginary instance—do you think, that in the case of a young married couple, say about two years married, if the husband suddenly becomes the intimate friend of a woman of—well, more than doubtful character, is always calling upon her, lunching with her, and probably paying her bills—do you think that the wife should not console herself?

LADY W. [*frowning.*] Console herself?

LORD D. Yes, I think she should—I think she has the right.

LADY W. Because the husband is vile should the wife be vile also?

LORD D. Vileness is a terrible word, Lady Windermere.

LADY W. It is a terrible thing, Lord Darlington.

LORD D. Do you know I am afraid that good people do a great deal of harm in this world. Certainly the greatest harm they do is that they make badness of such extraordinary importance. It is absurd to divide people into good and bad. People are either charming or tedious. I take the side of the charming, and you, Lady Windermere, can't help belonging to them.

LADY W. Now, Lord Darlington. [*rising and crossing R., front of him.*]

Don't stir, I am merely going to finish my flowers. [*Goes to table R. c.*]

LORD D. [*rising and moving chair.*] And I must say I think you are very hard on modern life, Lady Windermere. Of course there is much against it, I admit. Most women, for instance nowadays, are rather mercenary.

LADY W. Don't talk about such people.

LORD D. Well, then, setting mercenary people aside, who, of course, are dreadful, do you think seriously that women who have committed what the world calls a fault should never be forgiven?

LADY W. [*standing at table.*] I think they should never be forgiven.

LORD D. And me? Do you think that there should be the same laws for men as there are for women?

LADY W. Certainly!

LORD D. I think life too complex a thing to be settled by these hard and fast rules.

LADY W. If we had "these hard and fast rules," we should find life much more simple.

LORD D. You allow of no exceptions?

LADY W. None!

LORD D. Ah, what a fascinating Puritan you are, Lady Windermere!

LADY W. The adjective was unnecessary, Lord Darlington.

LORD D. I couldn't help it. I can resist everything except temptation.

LADY W. You have the modern affectation of weakness.

LORD D. [*looking at her.*] It's only an affectation, Lady Windermere.

[*Enter PARKER C.*]

PARKER. The Duchess of Berwick and Lady Agatha Carlisle.

[*Exit PARKER C.*]

[*Enter the DUCHESS of BERWICK and LADY AGATHA CARLISLE C.*]

DUCHESS OF B. [*coming down c. and shaking hands.*] Dear Margaret, I am so pleased to see you. You remember Agatha, don't you? [*crossing L. c.*] How do you do, Lord Darlington? I

won't let you know my daughter, you are far too wicked.

LORD D. Don't say that, Duchess. As a wicked man I am a complete failure. Why, there are lots of people who say I have never really done anything wrong in the whole course of my life. Of course they only say it behind my back.

DUCHESS OF B. Isn't he dreadful? Agatha, this is Lord Darlington. Mind you don't believe a word he says. [LORD DARLINGTON *crosses R. c.*] No, no tea, thank you, dear. [*crosses and sits on sofa.*] We have just had tea at Lady Markby's. Such bad tea, too. It was quite undrinkable. I wasn't at all surprised. Her own son-in-law supplies it. Agatha is looking forward so much to your ball to-night, dear Margaret.

LADY W. [*seated L. c.*] Oh, you mustn't think it is going to be a ball, Duchess. It is only a dance in honor of my birthday. A small and early.

LORD D. [*standing L. c.*] Very small, very early, and very select, Duchess.

DUCHESS OF B. [*on sofa L.*] Of course it's going to be select. But we know *that*, dear Margaret, about *your* house. It is really one of the few houses in London where I can take Agatha, and where I feel perfectly secure about poor Berwick. I don't know what Society is coming to. The most dreadful people seem to go everywhere. They certainly come to my parties—the men get quite furious if one doesn't ask them. Really, some one should make a stand against it.

LADY W. I will, Duchess. I will have no one in my house about whom there is any scandal.

LORD D. [*R. c.*] Oh, don't say that, Lady Windermere. I should never be admitted! [*Sitting.*]

DUCHESS OF B. Oh, men don't matter. With women it is different. We're good. Some of us are, at least. But we are positively getting elbowed into the corner. Our husbands would really forget our existence if we didn't nag at them from time to time, just to remind them that we have a perfect legal right to do so.

LORD D. It's a curious thing, Duchess, about the game of marriage—a game, by the way, that is going out of fashion—the wives hold all the honors, and invariably lose the odd trick.

DUCHESS OF B. The odd trick? Is that the husband, Lord Darlington?

LORD D. It would be rather a good name for the modern husband.

DUCHESS OF B. Dear Lord Darlington, how thoroughly depraved you are!

LADY W. Lord Darlington is trivial.

LORD D. Ah, don't say that, Lady Windermere.

LADY W. Why do you *talk* so trivially about life, then?

LORD D. Because I think that life is far too important a thing ever to talk seriously about it. [*Moves up c.*]

DUCHESS OF B. What does he mean? Do, as a concession to my poor wits, Lord Darlington, just explain to me what you really mean?

LORD D. [*coming down back of table.*] I think I had better not, Duchess. Nowadays to be intelligible is to be found out. Good-bye! [*shakes hands with DUCHESS OF BERWICK.*] And now, [*goes up stage*] Lady Windermere, good-bye. I may come to-night, mayn't I? Do let me come.

LADY W. [*standing up stage with LORD D.*] Yes, certainly. But you are not to say foolish, insincere things to people.

LORD D. [*smiling.*] Ah, you are beginning to reform me. It is a dangerous thing to reform any one, Lady Windermere. [*Bows, and exit c.*]

DUCHESS OF B. [*who has risen, goes c.*] What a charming, wicked creature! I like him so much. I'm quite delighted he's gone! How sweet you're looking! Where *do* you get your gowns? And now I must tell you how sorry I am for you, dear Margaret. [*crosses to sofa and sits with LADY WINDERMERE.*] Agatha, darling!

LADY A. Yes, mamma. [*Rises.*]

DUCHESS OF B. Will you go and look over the photograph album that I see there?

LADY A. Yes, mamma.

[*Goes to table L.*]

DUCHESS OF B. Dear girl! She is so fond of photographs of Switzerland. Such a pure taste, I think. But I really am so sorry for you, Margaret.

LADY W. [*smiling.*] Why, Duchess?

DUCHESS OF B. Oh, on account of that horrid woman. She dresses so well, too, which makes it much worse, sets such a dreadful example. Augustus—you know my disreputable brother—such a trial to us all—well, Augustus is completely infatuated about her. It is quite scandalous, for she is absolutely inadmissible into society. Many a woman has a past, but I am told that she has at least a dozen, and that they all fit.

LADY W. Whom are you talking about, Duchess?

DUCHESS OF B. About Mrs. Erlynne.

LADY W. Mrs. Erlynne? I never heard of her, Duchess. And what *has* she to do with me?

DUCHESS OF B. My poor child! Agatha, darling!

LADY A. Yes, mamma.

DUCHESS OF B. Will you go out on the terrace and look at the sunset?

LADY A. Yes, mamma.

[*Exit through window L.*]

DUCHESS OF B. Sweet girl! So devoted to sunsets! Shows such refinement of feeling, does it not? After all, there is nothing like nature, is there?

LADY W. But what is it, Duchess? Why do you talk to me about this person.

DUCHESS OF B. Don't you really know? I assure you we're all so distressed about it. Only last night at dear Lady Fansen's every one was saying how extraordinary it was that, of all men in London, Windermere should behave in such a way.

LADY W. My husband—what has *he* to do with any woman of that kind?

DUCHESS OF B. Ah, what indeed, dear? That is the point. He goes to see her continually, and stops for hours at a time, and while he is there she is not at home to any one. Not that many ladies call on her, dear, but she has a great many disreputable men

friends—my own brother in particular, as I told you—and that is what makes it so dreadful about Windermere. We looked upon *him* as being such a model husband, but I am afraid there is no doubt about it. My dear nieces—you know the Saville girls, don't you?—such nice domestic creatures—plain, dreadfully plain, but so good—well, they're always at the window doing fancy work, and making ugly things for the poor, which I think so useful of them in these dreadful socialistic days, and this terrible woman has taken a house in Curzon Street, right opposite them—such a respectable street, too. I don't know what we're coming to! And they tell me that Windermere goes there four and five times a week—they *see* him. They can't help it—and although they never talk scandal, they—well, of course—they remark on it to every one. And the worst of it all is, that I have been told that this woman has got a great deal of money out of somebody, for it seems that she came to London six months ago without anything at all to speak of, and now she has this charming house in Mayfair, drives her pony in the Park every afternoon, and all—well—all—since she has known poor dear Windermere.

LADY W. Oh, I can't believe it!

DUCHESS OF B. But it's quite true, my dear. The whole of London knows it. That is why I felt it was better to come and talk to you, and advise you to take Windermere away at once to Homburg or to Aix where he'll have something to amuse him, and where you can watch him all day long. I assure you, my dear, that on several occasions after I was first married I had to pretend to be very ill, and was obliged to drink the most unpleasant mineral waters, merely to get Berwick out of town. He was so extremely susceptible. Though I am bound to say he never gave away any large sums of money to anybody. He is far too high-principled for that.

LADY W. [*interrupting.*] Duchess, Duchess, it's impossible! [*rising and*

crossing stage c.] We are only married two years. Our child is but six months old.

[Sits in chair R. of L. table.]

DUCHESS OF B. Ah, the dear, pretty baby! How is the little darling? Is it a boy or a girl? I hope a girl!—Ah, no, I remember it's a boy! I'm so sorry. Boys are so wicked. My boy is excessively immoral. You wouldn't believe at what hours he comes home. And he's only left Oxford a few months—*I really don't know what they teach them there.*

LADY W. Are *all* men bad?

DUCHESS OF B. Oh, all of them, my dear, all of them, without any exception. And they never grow any better. Men become old, but they never become good.

LADY W. Windermere and I married for love.

DUCHESS OF B. Yes, we begin like that. It was only Berwick's brutal and incessant threats of suicide that made me accept him at all, and before the year was out he was running after all kinds of petticoats, every color, every shape, every material. In fact, before the honeymoon was over, I caught him winking at my maid, a most pretty, respectable girl. I dismissed her at once without a character.—No, I remember I passed her on to my sister; poor dear Sir George is so short-sighted, I thought it wouldn't matter. But it did, though; it was most unfortunate. *[rises.]* And now, my dear child, I must go, as we are dining out. And mind you don't take this little aberration of Windermere's too much to heart. Just take him abroad, and he'll come back to you all right.

LADY W. Come back to me? *[c.]*

DUCHESS OF B. *[L. c.]* Yes, dear, these wicked women get our husbands away from us, but they always come back, slightly damaged, of course. And don't make scenes, men hate them!

LADY W. It is very kind of you, Duchess, to come and tell me all this. But I can't believe that my husband is untrue to me.

DUCHESS OF B. Pretty child! I was like that once. Now I know that all

men are monsters. *[LADY WINDERMERE rings bell.]* The only thing to do is to feed the wretches well. A good cook does wonders, and that I know you have. My dear Margaret, you are not going to cry?

LADY W. You needn't be afraid, Duchess, I never cry.

DUCHESS OF B. That's quite right, dear. Crying is the refuge of plain women, but the ruin of pretty ones. Agatha, darling!

LADY A. *[entering L.]* Yes, mamma.

[Stands back of table L. c.]

DUCHESS OF B. Come and bid good-bye to Lady Windermere, and thank her for your charming visit. *[coming down again.]* And by the way, I must thank you for sending a card to Mr. Hopper—he's that rich young Australian people are taking such notice of just at present. His father made a great fortune by selling some kind of food in circular tins—most palatable, I believe,—I fancy it is the thing the servants always refuse to eat. But the son is quite interesting. I think he's attracted by dear Agatha's clever talk. Of course, we should be very sorry to lose her, but I think that a mother who doesn't part with a daughter every season has no real affection. We're coming to-night, dear. *[PARKER opens c. doors.]* And remember my advice, take the poor fellow out of town at once, it is the only thing to do. Good-bye, once more; come, Agatha.

[Exeunt DUCHESS OF BERWICK and LADY AGATHA CARLISLE c.]

LADY W. How horrible! I understand now what Lord Darlington meant by the imaginary instance of the couple not two years married: Oh! it can't be true—she spoke of enormous sums of money paid to this woman. I know where Arthur keeps his bank-book—in one of the drawers of that desk. I might find out by that. I *will* find out. *[opens drawer.]* No, it is some hideous mistake. *[rises and goes c.]* Some silly scandal! He loves me! He loves me! But why should I not look? I am his wife, I have a right to look! *[returns to bureau, takes out book and examines*

it, page by page, smiles and gives a sigh of relief.] I knew it, there is not a word of truth in this stupid story. [puts book back in drawer; as she does so, starts and takes out another book.] A second book—private—locked! [tries to open it, but fails; sees paper knife on bureau, and with it cuts cover from book; begins to start at the first page.] Mrs. Erlynne—£600—Mrs. Erlynne—£700—Mrs. Erlynne—£400. Oh! it is true! it is true! How horrible! [Throws book on floor.]

[Enter LORD WINDERMERE C.]

LORD W. Well, dear, has the fan been sent home yet? *[going R.C. sees book.]* Margaret, you have cut open my bank book. You have no right to do such a thing!

LADY W. You think it wrong that you are found out, don't you?

LORD W. I think it wrong that a wife should spy on her husband.

LADY W. I did not spy on you. I never knew of this woman's existence till half an hour ago. Some one who pitied me was kind enough to tell me what every one in London knows already—your daily visits to Curzon Street, your mad infatuation, the monstrous sums of money you squander on this infamous woman! *[Crossing L.]*

LORD W. Margaret, don't talk like that of Mrs. Erlynne, you don't know how unjust it is!

LADY W. *[turning to him.]* You are very jealous of Mrs. Erlynne's honor. I wish you had been as jealous of mine.

LORD W. Your honor is untouched, Margaret. You don't think for a moment that—

[Puts book back into desk.]

LADY W. I think that you spend your money strangely. That is all. Oh, don't imagine I mind about the money. As far as I am concerned, you may squander everything we have. But what I do mind is that you who have loved me, you who have taught me to love you, should pass from the love that is given to the love that is bought. Oh, it's horrible! *[sits on sofa.]* And it is I who feel degraded. You don't

feel anything. I feel stained, utterly stained. You can't realize how hideous the last six months seem to me now—every kiss you have given me is tainted in my memory.

LORD W. *[crossing to her.]* Don't say that, Margaret, I never loved any one in the whole world but you.

LADY W. *[rises.]* Who is this woman, then? Why do you take a house for her?

LORD W. I did not take a house for her.

LADY W. You gave her the money to do it, which is the same thing.

LORD W. Margaret, as far as I have known Mrs. Erlynne—

LADY W. Is there a Mr. Erlynne—or is he a myth?

LORD W. Her husband died many years ago. She is alone in the world.

LADY W. No relations? *[A pause.]*

LORD W. None.

LADY W. Rather curious, isn't it?

[L.]

LORD W. *[L. c.]* Margaret, I was saying to you—and I beg you to listen to me—that as far as I have known Mrs. Erlynne, she has conducted herself well. If years ago—

LADY W. Oh! *[crossing R. c.]* I don't want details about her life.

LORD W. I am not going to give you any details about her life. I tell you simply this—Mrs. Erlynne was once honored, loved, respected. She was well born, she had a position—she lost everything—threw it away, if you like. That makes it all the more bitter. Misfortunes one can endure—they come from outside, they are accidents. But to suffer for one's own faults—ah! there is the sting of life. It was twenty years ago too. She was little more than a girl then. She had been a wife for even less time than you have.

LADY W. I am not interested in her—and—you should not mention this woman and me in the same breath. It is an error of taste.

[Sitting R. at desk.]

LORD W. Margaret, you could save this woman. She wants to get back

into society, and she wants you to help her. *[Crossing to her.]*

LADY W. Me?

LORD W. Yes, you.

LADY W. How impertinent of her!

[A pause.]

LORD W. Margaret, I came to ask you a great favor, and I still ask it of you, though you have discovered what I had intended you should never have known, that I have given Mrs. Erlynne a large sum of money. I want you to send her an invitation for our party to-night. *[Standing L. of her.]*

LADY W. You are mad. *[Rises.]*

LORD W. I entreat you. People may chatter about her, do chatter about her, of course, but they don't know anything definite against her. She has been to several houses—not to houses where you would go, I admit, but still to houses where women who are in what is called Society nowadays do go. That does not content her. She wants you to receive her once.

LADY W. As a triumph for her, I suppose.

LORD W. No; but because she knows that you are a good woman—and that if she comes here once she will have a chance of a happier, a surer life, than she has had. She will make no further effort to know you. Won't you help a woman who is trying to get back?

LADY W. No! If a woman really repents, she never wishes to return to the society that has made or seen her ruin.

LORD W. I beg of you.

LADY W. *[crossing to door R.]* I am going to dress for dinner, and don't mention the subject again this evening. Arthur, *[going to him c.]* you fancy because I have no father or mother that I am alone in the world and you can treat me as you choose. You are wrong, I have friends, many friends.

LORD W. *[L. c.]* Margaret, you are talking foolishly, recklessly. I won't argue with you, but I insist upon your asking Mrs. Erlynne to-night.

LADY W. *[R. c.]* I shall do nothing of the kind. *[Crossing L. c.]*

LORD W. You refuse?

LADY W. Absolutely!

LORD W. Ah, Margaret, do this for my sake; it is her last chance.

LADY W. What has that to do with me?

LORD W. How hard good women are!

LADY W. How weak bad men are!

LORD W. Margaret, none of us men may be good enough for the women we marry—that is quite true—but you don't imagine I would ever—oh, the suggestion is monstrous!

LADY W. Why should you be different from other men? I am told that there is hardly a husband in London who does not waste his life over some shameful passion.

LORD W. I am not one of them.

LADY W. I am not sure of that.

LORD W. You are sure in your heart. But don't make chasm after chasm between us. God knows the last few minutes have thrust us wide enough apart. Sit down and write the card.

LADY W. Nothing in the whole world would induce me.

LORD W. *[crossing to the bureau.]* Then I will.

[Rings electric bell, sits down and writes card.]

LADY W. You are going to invite this woman? *[Crossing to him.]*

LORD W. Yes. *[Pause.]*

[Enter PARKER.]

LORD W. Parker!

PARKER. Yes, my lord.

[Comes down L. c.]

LORD W. Have this note sent to Mrs. Erlynne at No. 84A Curzon Street.

[Crossing to L. c. and giving note to PARKER.] There is no answer. *[Exit PARKER c.]*

LADY W. Arthur, if that woman comes here, I shall insult her.

LORD W. Margaret, don't say that.

LADY W. I mean it.

LORD W. Child, if you did such a thing, there's not a woman in London who wouldn't pity you.

LADY W. There is not a good woman in London who would not applaud me.

We have been too lax. We must make an example. I propose to begin to-night. [*picking up fan.*] Yes, you gave me this fan to-day; it was your birthday present. If that woman crosses my threshold, I shall strike her across the face with it.

LORD W. Margaret, you couldn't do such a thing.

LADY W. You don't know me!
[*Moves R.*]

[*Enter PARKER.*]

LADY W. Parker!

PARKER. Yes, my lady.

LADY W. I shall dine in my own room. I don't want dinner, in fact. See that everything is ready by half-past ten. And, Parker, be sure you pronounce the names of the guests very distinctly to-night. Sometimes you speak so fast that I miss them. I am particularly anxious to hear the names quite clearly, so as to make no mistake. You understand, Parker?

PARKER. Yes, my lady.

LADY W. That will do!

[*Exit PARKER C.*]

[*Speaking to LORD W.*] Arthur, if that woman comes here—I warn you—

LORD W. Margaret, you'll ruin us!

LADY W. Us! From this moment my life is separate from yours. But if you wish to avoid a public scandal, write at once to this woman, and tell her that I forbid her to come here!

LORD W. I will not—I cannot—she must come!

LADY W. Then I shall do exactly as I have said. [*goes R.*] You leave me no choice. [*Exit R.*]

LORD W. [*calling after her.*] Margaret! Margaret! [*a pause.*] My God! What shall I do! I dare not tell her who this woman really is. The shame would kill her.

[*Sinks down into a chair and buries his face in his hands.*]

ACT II

Drawing-room in LORD WINDERMERE'S house. Door R. U. opening into

ballroom, where band is playing. Door L. through which guests are entering. Door L. U. opens on an illuminated terrace. Palms, flowers, and brilliant lights. Room crowded with guests. LADY WINDERMERE is receiving them.

DUCHESS OF B. [*up C.*] So strange Lord Windermere isn't here. Mr. Hopper is very late, too. You have kept those five dances for him, Agatha!

[*Comes down.*]

LADY A. Yes, mamma.

DUCHESS OF B. [*sitting on sofa.*] Just let me see your card, I'm so glad Lady Windermere has revived cards.—They're a mother's only safeguard. You dear simple little thing! [*scratches out two names.*] No nice girl should ever waltz with such particularly younger sons! It looks so fast! The last two dances you must pass on the terrace with Mr. Hopper.

[*Enter MR. DUMBY and LADY PLYMDALE from the ballroom.*]

LADY A. Yes, mamma.

DUCHESS OF B. [*fanning herself.*] The air is so pleasant there.

PARKER. Mrs. Cowper-Cowper. Lady Stutfield. Sir James Royston. Mr. Guy Berkeley.

[*These people enter as announced.*]

DUMBY. Good-evening, Lady Stutfield. I suppose this will be the last ball of the season?

LADY S. I suppose so, Mr. Dumby. It's been a delightful season, hasn't it?

DUMBY. Quite delightful! Good-evening, Duchess. I suppose this will be the last ball of the season?

DUCHESS OF B. I suppose so, Mr. Dumby. It has been a very dull season, hasn't it?

DUMBY. Dreadfully dull! Dreadfully dull!

MRS. C.-C. Good-evening, Mr. Dumby. I suppose this will be the last ball of the season?

DUMBY. Oh, I think not. There'll probably be two more.

[*Wanders back to LADY PLYMDALE.*]

PARKER. Mr. Rufford. Lady Jeddburgh and Miss Graham. Mr. Hopper.

[*These people enter as announced.*]

HOPPER. How do you do, Lady Windermere? How do you do, Duchess? [*Bows to LADY AGATHA.*]

DUCHESS OF B. Dear Mr. Hopper, how nice of you to come so early! We all know how you are run after in London.

HOPPER. Capital place, London! They are not nearly so exclusive in London as they are in Sydney.

DUCHESS OF B. Ah! we know your value, Mr. Hopper. We wish there were more like you. It would make life so much easier. Do you know, Mr. Hopper, dear Agatha and I are so much interested in Australia. It must be so pretty with all the dear little kangaroos flying about. Agatha has found it on the map. What a curious shape it is! Just like a large packing-case. However, it is a very young country, isn't it?

HOPPER. Wasn't it made at the same time as the others, Duchess?

DUCHESS OF B. How clever you are, Mr. Hopper. You have a cleverness quite of your own. Now I mustn't keep you.

HOPPER. But I should like to dance with Lady Agatha, Duchess.

DUCHESS OF B. Well, I *hope* she has a dance left. Have you got a dance left, Agatha?

LADY A. Yes, mamma.

DUCHESS OF B. The next one?

LADY A. Yes, mamma.

HOPPER. May I have the pleasure?

[*LADY AGATHA bows.*]

DUCHESS OF B. Mind you take great care of my little chatter-box, Mr. Hopper.

[*LADY AGATHA CARLISLE and MR. HOPPER pass into ballroom.*]

[*Enter LORD WINDERMERE C.*]

LORD W. Margaret, I want to speak to you.

LADY W. In a moment.

[*The music stops.*]

PARKER. Lord Augustus Lorton.

[*Enter LORD AUGUSTUS LORTON.*]

LORD A. Good-evening, Lady Windermere.

DUCHESS OF B. Sir James, will you take me into the ballroom? Augustus has been dining with us to-night. I really have had quite enough of dear Augustus for the moment.

[*SIR JAMES ROYSTON gives the DUCHESS his arm and escorts her into the ballroom.*]

PARKER. Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Bowden. Lord and Lady Paisley. Lord Darlington.

[*These people enter as announced.*]

LORD A. [*coming up to LORD WINDERMERE.*] Want to speak to you particularly, dear boy. I'm worn to a shadow. Know I don't look it. None of us men do look what we really are. Demmed good thing, too. What I want to know is this. Who is she? Where does she come from? Why hasn't she got any demmed relations? Demmed nuisance, relations! But they make one so demmed respectable.

LORD W. You are talking of Mrs. Erlynne, I suppose? I only met her six months ago! Till then I never knew of her existence.

LORD A. You have seen a good deal of her since then.

LORD W. [*coldly.*] Yes, I have seen a good deal of her since then. I have just seen her.

LORD A. Egad! the women are very down on her. I have been dining with Arabella this evening! By Jove! you should have heard what she said about Mrs. Erlynne. She didn't leave a rag on her. [*aside.*] Berwick and I told her that didn't matter much, as the lady in question must have an extremely fine figure. You should have seen Arabella's expression! But, look here, dear boy. I don't know what to do about Mrs. Erlynne. Egad! I might be married to her; she treats me with such demmed indifference. She's deuced clever, too! She explains everything. Egad! She explains you. She

has got any amount of explanation for you—and all of them different.

LORD W. No explanations are necessary about my friendship with Mrs. Erlynne.

LORD A. Hem! Well, look here, dear old fellow. Do you think she will ever get into this demmed thing called Society? Would you introduce her to your wife? No use beating about the confounded bush. Would you do that?

LORD W. Mrs. Erlynne is coming here to-night.

LORD A. Your wife has sent her a card?

LORD W. Mrs. Erlynne has received a card.

LORD A. Then she's all right, dear boy. But why didn't you tell me that before. It would have saved me a heap of worry and demmed misunderstandings!

[LADY AGATHA CARLISLE and MR. HOPPER cross and exit on terrace L. U. E.]

PARKER. Mr. Cecil Graham!

[Enter MR. CECIL GRAHAM.]

CECIL G. [bows to LADY W., passes over and shakes hands with LORD W.] Good-evening, Arthur. Why don't you ask me how I am? I like people to ask me how I am. It shows a wide-spread interest in my health. Now to-night I am not at all well. Been dining with my people. Wonder why it is one's people are always so tedious? My father would talk morality after dinner. I told him he was old enough to know better. But my experience is that as soon as people are old enough to know better, they don't know anything at all. Hullo, Tuppy! Hear you're going to be married again; thought you were tired of that game.

LORD A. You're excessively trivial, my dear boy, excessively trivial!

CECIL G. By the way, Tuppy, which is it? Have you been twice married and once divorced, or twice divorced and once married? I say, you've been twice divorced and once married. It seems so much more probable.

LORD A. I have a very bad memory. I really don't remember which.

[Moves away R.]

LADY P. Lord Windermere, I've something most particular to ask you.

LORD W. I am afraid—if you will excuse me—I must join my wife.

LADY P. Oh, you mustn't dream of such a thing. It's most dangerous nowadays for a husband to pay any attention to his wife in public. It always makes people think that he beats her when they're alone. The world has grown so suspicious of anything that looks like a happy married life. But I'll tell you what it is at supper.

[Moves towards door of ballroom.]

LORD W. [c.] Margaret, I must speak to you.

LADY W. Will you hold my fan for me, Lord Darlington? Thanks.

[Comes down to him.]

LORD W. [crossing to her.] Margaret, what you said before dinner was, of course, impossible?

LADY W. That woman is not coming here to-night!

LORD W. [R. c.] Mrs. Erlynne is coming here, and if you in any way annoy or wound her, you will bring shame and sorrow on us both. Remember that! Ah, Margaret! only trust me! A wife should trust her husband!

LADY W. [c.] London is full of women who trust their husbands. One can always recognize them. They look so thoroughly unhappy. I am not going to be one of them. [moves up.] Lord Darlington, will you give me back my fan, please? Thanks . . . A useful thing, a fan, isn't it? . . . I want a friend to-night, Lord Darlington. I didn't know I would want one so soon.

LORD D. Lady Windermere! I knew the time would come some day; but why to-night?

LORD W. I will tell her. I must. It would be terrible if there were any scene. Margaret—

PARKER. Mrs. Erlynne.

[LORD WINDERMERE starts. MRS. ERLYNNE enters, very beautifully dressed and very dignified.]

LADY WINDERMERE *clutches at her fan, then lets it drop on the floor. She bows coldly to MRS. ERLYNNE, who bows to her sweetly in turn, and sails into the room.*

LORD D. You have dropped your fan, Lady Windermere.

[Picks it up and hands it to her.]

MRS. E. [c.] How do you do again, Lord Windermere? How charming your sweet wife looks! Quite a picture!

LORD W. *[in a low voice.]* It was terribly rash of you to come!

MRS. E. *[smiling.]* The wisest thing I ever did in my life. And, by the way, you must pay me a good deal of attention this evening. I am afraid of the women. You must introduce me to some of them. The men I can always manage. How do you do, Lord Augustus? You have quite neglected me lately. I have not seen you since yesterday. I am afraid you're faithless. Every one told me so.

LORD A. [R.] Now really, Mrs. Erlynne, allow me to explain.

MRS. E. [R. c.] No, dear Lord Augustus, you can't explain anything. It is your chief charm.

LORD A. Ah! if you find charms in me, Mrs. Erlynne—

[They converse together. LORD WINDERMERE moves uneasily about the room watching MRS. ERLYNNE.]

LORD D. *[to LADY W.]* How pale you are!

LADY W. Cowards are always pale.

LORD D. You look faint. Come out on the terrace.

LADY W. Yes. *[to PARKER.]* Parker, send my cloak out.

MRS. E. *[crossing to her.]* Lady Windermere, how beautifully your terrace is illuminated. Reminds me of Prince Doria's at Rome. *[LADY WINDERMERE bows coldly, and goes off with LORD DARLINGTON.]* Oh, how do you do, Mr. Graham? Isn't that your aunt, Lady Jedburgh? I should so much like to know her.

CECIL G. *[after a moment's hesita-*

tion and embarrassment.] Oh, certainly, if you wish it. Aunt Caroline, allow me to introduce Mrs. Erlynne.

MRS. E. So pleased to meet you, Lady Jedburgh. *[sits beside her on the sofa.]* Your nephew and I are great friends. I am so much interested in his political career. I think he's sure to be a wonderful success. He thinks like a Tory, and talks like a Radical, and that's so important nowadays. He's such a brilliant talker, too. But we all know from whom he inherits that. Lord Allendale was saying to me only yesterday in the Park, that Mr. Graham talks almost as well as his aunt.

LADY J. [R.] Most kind of you to say these charming things to me!

[MRS. ERLYNNE smiles and continues conversation.]

DUMBY. *[to CECIL G.]* Did you introduce Mrs. Erlynne to Lady Jedburgh.

CECIL G. Had to, my dear fellow. Couldn't help it. That woman can make one do anything she wants. How, I don't know.

DUMBY. Hope to goodness she won't speak to me!

[Saunters towards LADY PLYMDALE.]

MRS. E. *[c. to LADY JEDBURGH.]* On Thursday? With great pleasure. *[rises and speaks to LORD WINDERMERE laughing.]* What a bore it is to have to be civil to these old dowagers! But they always insist on it.

LADY P. *[to MR. DUMBY.]* Who is that well-dressed woman talking to Windermere?

DUMBY. Haven't got the slightest idea. Looks like an *édition de luxe* of a wicked French novel, meant specially for the English market.

MRS. E. So that is poor Dumby with Lady Plymdale? I hear she is frightfully jealous of him. He doesn't seem anxious to speak to me to-night. I suppose he is afraid of her. Those straw-colored women have dreadful tempers. Do you know, I think I'll dance with you first, Windermere. *[LORD WINDERMERE bites his lip and frowns.]* It will make Lord Augustus

so jealous! Lord Augustus! [LORD AUGUSTUS comes down.] Lord Windermere insists on my dancing with him first, and, as it's his own house, I can't well refuse. You know I would much sooner dance with you.

LORD A. [*with a low bow.*] I wish I could think so, Mrs. Erlynne.

MRS. E. You know it far too well. I can fancy a person dancing through life with you and finding it charming.

LORD A. [*placing his hand on his white waistcoat.*] Oh, thank you, thank you. You are the most adorable of all ladies!

MRS. E. What a nice speech! So simple and so sincere! Just the sort of speech I like. Well, you shall hold my bouquet. [*goes towards ballroom on LORD WINDERMERE'S arm.*] Ah, Mr. Dumby, how are you? I am so sorry I have been out the last three times you have called. Come and lunch on Friday.

DUMBY. [*with perfect nonchalance.*] Delighted.

[LADY PLYMDALE glares with indignation at Mr. DUMBY. LORD AUGUSTUS follows Mrs. ERLYNNE and LORD WINDERMERE into the ballroom holding bouquet.]

LADY P. [*to Mr. DUMBY.*] What an absolute brute you are! I never can believe a word you say! Why did you tell me you didn't know her? What do you mean by calling on her three times running? You are not to go to lunch there; of course you understand that?

DUMBY. My dear Laura, I wouldn't dream of going!

LADY P. You haven't told me her name yet. Who is she?

DUMBY. [*coughs slightly and smooths his hair.*] She's a Mrs. Erlynne.

LADY P. That woman!

DUMBY. Yes, that is what every one calls her.

LADY P. How very interesting! How intensely interesting! I really must have a good stare at her. [*goes to door of ballroom and looks in.*] I have heard the most shocking things about her. They say she is ruining

poor Windermere. And Lady Windermere, who goes in for being so proper, invites her! How extremely amusing! It takes a thoroughly good woman to do a thoroughly stupid thing. You are to lunch there on Friday?

DUMBY. Why?

LADY P. Because I want you to take my husband with you. He has been so attentive lately, that he has become a perfect nuisance. Now, this woman is just the thing for him. He'll dance attendance upon her as long as she lets him, and won't bother me. I assure you, women of that kind are most useful. They form the basis of other people's marriages.

DUMBY. What a mystery you are!

LADY P. [*looking at him.*] I wish you were!

DUMBY. I am—to myself. I am the only person in the world I should like to know thoroughly; but I don't see any chance of it just at present.

[*They pass into the ballroom, and LADY WINDERMERE and LORD DARLINGTON enter from the terrace.*]

LADY W. Yes. Her coming here is monstrous, unbearable. I know now what you meant to-day at tea time. Why didn't you tell me right out? You should have!

LORD D. I couldn't! A man can't tell these things about another man! But if I had known he was going to make you ask her here to-night, I think I would have told you. That insult, at any rate, you would have been spared.

LADY W. I did not ask her. He insisted on her coming—against my entreaties—against my commands. Oh! the house is tainted for me! I feel that every woman here sneers at me as she dances by with my husband. What have I done to deserve this? I gave him all my life. He took it—used it—spoiled it! I am degraded in my own eyes; and I lack courage—I am a coward! [*Sits down on sofa.*]

LORD D. If I know you at all, I know that you can't live with a man who treats you like this! What sort of life would you have with him? You

would feel that he was lying to you every moment of the day. You would feel that the look in his eyes was false, his voice false, his touch false, his passion false. He would come to you when he was weary of others; you would have to comfort him. He would come to you when he was devoted to others; you would have to charm him. You would have to be to him the mask of his real life, the cloak to hide his secret.

LADY W. You are right—you are terribly right. But where am I to turn? You said you would be my friend, Lord Darlington.—Tell me, what am I to do? Be my friend now.

LORD D. Between men and women there is no friendship possible. There is passion, enmity, worship, love, but no friendship. I love you—

LADY W. No, no! [*Rises.*]

LORD D. Yes, I love you! You are more to me than anything in the whole world. What does your husband give you? Nothing. Whatever is in him he gives to this wretched woman, whom he has thrust into your society, into your home, to shame you before every one. I offer you my life—

LADY W. Lord Darlington!

LORD D. My life—my whole life. Take it, and do with it what you will. . . . I love you—love you as I have never loved any living thing. From the moment I met you I loved you, loved you blindly, adoringly, madly! You did not know it then—you know it now! Leave this house to-night. I won't tell you that the world matters nothing, or the world's voice, or the voice of Society. They matter a good deal. They matter far too much. But there are moments when one has to choose between living one's own life, fully, entirely, completely—or dragging out some false, shallow, degrading existence that the world in its hypocrisy demands. You have that moment now. Choose! Oh, my love, choose!

LADY W. [*moving slowly away from him, and looking at him with startled eyes.*] I have not the courage.

LORD D. [*following her.*] Yes; you

have the courage. There may be six months of pain, of disgrace even, but when you no longer bear his name, when you bear mine, all will be well. Margaret, my love, my wife that shall be some day—yes, my wife! You know it! What are you now? This woman has the place that belongs by right to you. Oh! go—go out of this house, with head erect, with a smile upon your lips, with courage in your eyes. All London will know why you did it; and who will blame you? No one. If they do, what matter? Wrong? What is wrong? It's wrong for a man to abandon his wife for a shameless woman. It is wrong for a wife to remain with a man who so dishonors her. You said once you would make no compromise with things. Make none now. Be brave! Be yourself!

LADY W. I am afraid of being myself. Let me think! Let me wait! My husband may return to me.

[*Sits down on sofa.*]

LORD D. And you would take him back! You are not what I thought you were. You are just the same as every other woman. You would stand anything rather than face the censure of a world whose praise you would despise. In a week you will be driving with this woman in the Park. She will be your constant guest—your dearest friend. You would endure anything rather than break with one blow this monstrous tie. You are right. You have no courage; none.

LADY W. Ah, give me time to think. I cannot answer you now.

[*Passes her hand nervously over her brow.*]

LORD D. It must be now or not at all.

LADY W. [*rising from the sofa.*] Then not at all! [*A pause.*]

LORD D. You break my heart!

LADY W. Mine is already broken.

[*A pause.*]

LORD D. To-morrow I leave England. This is the last time I shall ever look on you. You will never see me again. For one moment our lives met—our souls touched. They must never

meet or touch again. Good-bye, Margaret. *[Exit.]*

LADY W. How alone I am in life! How terribly alone! *[The music stops.]*

[Enter the DUCHESS OF BERWICK and LORD PAISLEY laughing and talking. Other guests come on from ballroom.]

DUCHESS OF B. Dear Margaret, I've just been having such a delightful chat with Mrs. Erlynne. I am so sorry for what I said to you this afternoon about her. Of course, she must be all right if you invite her. A most attractive woman, and has such sensible views on life. Told me she entirely disapproved of people marrying more than once, so I feel quite safe about poor Augustus. Can't imagine why people speak against her. It's those horrid nieces of mine—the Saville girls—they're always talking scandal. Still, I should go to Homburg, dear, I really should. She is just a little too attractive. But where is Agatha? Oh, there she is. *[LADY AGATHA and MR. HOPPER enter from the terrace L. U. E.]* Mr. Hopper, I am very angry with you. You have taken Agatha out on the terrace, and she is so delicate.

HOPPER *[L. C.]* Awfully sorry, Duchess. We went out for a moment and then got chatting together.

DUCHESS OF B. *[C.]* Ah, about dear Australia, I suppose?

HOPPER. Yes.

DUCHESS OF B. Agatha, darling! *[Beckons her over.]*

LADY A. Yes, mamma!

DUCHESS OF B. *[Aside.]* Did Mr. Hopper definitely—

LADY A. Yes, mamma.

DUCHESS OF B. And what answer did you give him, dear child?

LADY A. Yes, mamma.

DUCHESS OF B. *[affectionately.]* My dear one! You always say the right thing. Mr. Hopper! James! Agatha has told me everything. How cleverly you have both kept your secret!

HOPPER. You don't mind my taking Agatha off to Australia, then, Duchess?

DUCHESS OF B. *[indignantly.]* To

Australia? Oh, don't mention that dreadful vulgar place.

HOPPER. But she said she'd like to come with me.

DUCHESS OF B. *[severely.]* Did you say that, Agatha?

LADY A. Yes, mamma.

DUCHESS OF B. Agatha, you say the most silly things possible. I think on the whole that Grosvenor Square would be a more healthy place to reside in. There are lots of vulgar people live in Grosvenor Square, but at any rate there are no horrid kangaroos crawling about. But we'll talk about that to-morrow. James, you can take Agatha down. You'll come to lunch, of course, James. At half past one instead of two. The Duke will wish to say a few words to you, I am sure.

HOPPER. I should like to have a chat with the Duke, Duchess. He has not said a single word to me yet.

DUCHESS OF B. I think you'll find he will have a great deal to say to you to-morrow.

[Exit LADY AGATHA CARLISLE with MR. HOPPER.]

And now good-night, Margaret. I'm afraid it's the old, old story, dear Love—well, not love at first sight, but love at the end of the season, which is so much more satisfactory.

LADY W. Good-night, Duchess.

[Exit the DUCHESS OF BERWICK on LORD PLYMDALE'S arm.]

LADY P. My dear Margaret, what a handsome woman your husband has been dancing with! I should be quite jealous if I were you! Is she a great friend of yours?

LADY W. No!

LADY P. Really? Good-night, dear *[Looks at MR. DUMBY and exit.]*

DUMBY. Awful manners young Hopper has!

CECIL G. Ah! Hopper is one of Nature's gentlemen, the worst type of gentlemen I know.

DUMBY. Sensible woman, Lady Windermere. Lots of wives would have objected to Mrs. Erlynne coming. But Lady Windermere has that uncommon thing called common sense.

CECIL G. And Windermere knows that nothing looks so like innocence as an indiscretion.

DUMBY. Yes; dear Windermere is becoming almost modern. Never thought he would.

[*Bows to LADY WINDERMERE and exit.*]

LADY J. Good-night, Lady Windermere. What a fascinating woman Mrs. Erlynne is! She is coming to lunch on Thursday, won't you come too? I expect the Bishop and dear Lady Merton.

LADY W. I am afraid I am engaged, Lady Jedburgh.

LADY J. So sorry. Come, dear.

[*Exeunt LADY JEDBURGH and MISS GRAHAM.*]

[*Enter MRS. ERLYNNE and LORD WINDERMERE.*]

MRS. E. Charming ball it has been! Quite reminds me of old days. [*sits on the sofa.*] And I see that there are just as many fools in society as there used to be. So pleased to find that nothing has altered! Except Margaret. She's grown quite pretty. The last time I saw her—twenty years ago, she was a fright in flannel. Positive fright, I assure you. The dear Duchess! and that sweet Lady Agatha! Just the type of girl I like! Well, really, Windermere, if I am to be the Duchess's sister-in-law—

LORD W. [*sitting L. of her.*] But are you—?

[*Exit MR. CECIL GRAHAM with rest of guests. LADY WINDERMERE watches, with a look of scorn and pain, MRS. ERLYNNE and her husband. They are unconscious of her presence.*]

MRS. E. Oh yes! He's to call to-morrow at twelve o'clock. He wanted to propose to-night. In fact, he did. He kept on proposing. Poor Augustus, you know how he repeats himself. Such a bad habit! But I told him I wouldn't give him an answer till to-morrow. Of course I am going to take him. And I dare say I'll make him an admirable wife, as wives go. And there

is a great deal of good in Lord Augustus. Fortunately it is all on the surface. Just where good qualities should be. Of course you must help me in this matter.

LORD W. I am not called on to encourage Lord Augustus, I suppose?

MRS. E. Oh, no! I do the encouraging. But you will make me a handsome settlement, Windermere, won't you?

LORD W. [*frowning.*] Is that what you want to talk to me about to-night?

MRS. E. Yes.

LORD W. [*with a gesture of impatience.*] I will not talk of it here.

MRS. E. [*laughing.*] Then we will talk of it on the terrace. Even business should have a picturesque background. Should it not, Windermere? With a proper background women can do anything.

LORD W. Won't to-morrow do as well?

MRS. E. No; you see, to-morrow I am going to accept him. And I think it would be a good thing if I was able to tell him that—well, what shall I say—£2000 a year left me by a third cousin—or a second husband—or some distant relative of that kind. It would be an additional attraction, wouldn't it? You have a delightful opportunity now of paying me a compliment, Windermere. But you are not very clever at paying compliments. I am afraid Margaret doesn't encourage you in that excellent habit. It's a great mistake on her part. When men give up saying what is charming, they give up thinking what is charming. But seriously, what do you say to £2000? £2500, I think. In modern life margin is everything. Windermere, don't you think the world an intensely amusing place? I do!

[*Exit on terrace with LORD WINDERMERE. Music strikes up in ballroom.*]

LADY W. To stay in this house any longer is impossible. To-night a man who loves me offered me his whole life. I refused it. It was foolish of me. I will offer him mine now. I will give him mine. I will go to him! [*puts on*

cloak and goes to door, then turns back; sits down at table and writes a letter, puts it into an envelope, and leaves it on table.] Arthur has never understood me. When he reads this, he will. He may do as he chooses now with his life. I have done with mine as I think best, as I think right. It is he who has broken the bond of marriage—not I. I only break its bondage. [Exit.]

[PARKER enters L. and crosses towards the ballroom R. Enter MRS. ERLYNNE.]

MRS. E. Is Lady Windermere in the ballroom?

PARKER. Her ladyship has just gone out.

MRS. E. Gone out? She's not on the terrace?

PARKER. No, madam. Her ladyship has just gone out of the house.

MRS. E. [starts and looks at the servant with a puzzled expression on her face.] Out of the house?

PARKER. Yes, madam—her ladyship told me she had left a letter for his lordship on the table.

MRS. E. A letter for Lord Windermere?

PARKER. Yes, madam.

MRS. E. Thank you.

[Exit PARKER. The music in the ballroom stops.]

Gone out of her house! A letter addressed to her husband! [goes over to table and looks at letter; takes it up and lays it down again with a shudder of fear.] No, no! It would be impossible! Life doesn't repeat its tragedies like that! Oh, why does this horrible fancy come across me? Why do I remember now the one moment of my life I most wish to forget? Does life repeat its tragedies? [tears letter open and reads it, then sinks down into a chair with a gesture of anguish.] Oh, how terrible! the same words that twenty years ago I wrote to her father! and how bitterly I have been punished for it! No; my punishment, my real punishment is to-night, is now!

[Still seated R.]

[Enter LORD WINDERMERE L. U. E.]

LORD W. Have you said good-night to my wife? [Comes c.]

MRS. E. [crushing letter in her hand.] Yes.

LORD W. Where is she?

MRS. E. She is very tired. She has gone to bed. She said she had a headache.

LORD W. I must go to her. You'll excuse me?

MRS. E. [rising hurriedly.] Oh, no! it's nothing serious. She's only very tired, that is all. Besides, there are people still in the supper-room. She wants you to make her apologies to them. She said she didn't wish to be disturbed. [drops letter.] She asked me to tell you.

LORD W. [picks up letter.] You have dropped something.

MRS. E. Oh, yes, thank you, that is mine. [Puts out her hand to take it.]

LORD W. [still looking at letter.] But it's my wife's handwriting, isn't it?

MRS. E. [takes the letter quickly.] Yes, it's—an address. Will you ask them to call my carriage, please?

LORD W. Certainly.

[Goes L. and exit.]

MRS. E. Thanks. What can I do? What can I do? I feel a passion awakening within me that I never felt before. What can it mean? The daughter must not be like the mother—that would be terrible. How can I save her? How can I save my child? A moment may ruin a life. Who knows that better than I? Windermere must be got out of the house; that is absolutely necessary. [goes L.] But how shall I do it? It must be done somehow. Ah!

[Enter LORD AUGUSTUS LORTON R. U. E. carrying bouquet.]

LORD A. Dear lady, I am in such suspense! May I not have an answer to my request?

MRS. E. Lord Augustus, listen to me. You are to take Lord Windermere down to your club at once, and keep him there as long as possible. You understand?

LORD A. But you said you wished me to keep early hours?

MRS. E. [*nervously.*] Do what I tell you. Do what I tell you.

LORD A. And my reward?

MRS. E. Your reward? Your reward? Oh! ask me that to-morrow. But don't let Windermere out of your sight to-night. If you do I will never forgive you. I will never speak to you again. I'll have nothing to do with you. Remember you are to keep Windermere at your club, and don't let him come back to-night. [*Exit.*]

LORD A. Well, really, I might be her husband already. Positively I might.

[*Follows her in a bewildered manner.*]

ACT III

LORD DARLINGTON'S rooms. A large sofa is in front of fireplace R. At the back of the stage a curtain is drawn across the window. Doors L. and R. Table R. with writing materials. Table C. with syphons, glasses, and Tantalus frame. Table L. with cigar and cigarette box. Lamps lit.

LADY W. [*standing by the fireplace.*] Why doesn't he come? This waiting is horrible. He should be here. Why is he not here, to wake by passionate words some fire within me? I am cold—cold as a loveless thing. Arthur must have read my letter by this time. If he cared for me, he would have come after me, would have taken me back by force. But he doesn't care. He's entrained by this woman—fascinated by her—dominated by her. If a woman wants to hold a man, she has merely to appeal to what is worst in him. We make gods of men, and they leave us. Others make brutes of them and they fawn and are faithful. How hideous life is! . . . Oh! it was mad of me to come here, horribly mad. And yet which is the worst, I wonder, to be at the mercy of a man who loves one, or the wife of a man who in one's own house dishonors

one? What woman knows? What woman in the whole world? But will he love me always, this man to whom I am giving my life? What do I bring him? Lips that have lost the note of joy, eyes that are blighted by tears, chill hands and icy heart. I bring him nothing. I must go back—no; I can't go back, my letter has put me in their power—Arthur would not take me back! That fatal letter! No! Lord Darlington leaves England to-morrow. I will go with him—I have no choice. [*sits down for a few moments; then starts up and puts on her cloak.*] No, no! I will go back, let Arthur do with me what he pleases. I can't wait here. It has been madness my coming. I must go at once. As for Lord Darlington—Oh! here he is! What shall I do? What can I say to him? Will he let me go away at all? I have heard that men are brutal, horrible. . . . Oh!

[*Hides her face in her hands.*]

[*Enter MRS. ERLYNNE L.*]

MRS. E. Lady Windermere! [*LADY WINDERMERE starts and looks up, then recoils in contempt.*] Thank Heaven I am in time. You must go back to your husband's house immediately.

LADY W. Must?

MRS. E. [*authoritatively.*] Yes, you must! There is not a second to be lost. Lord Darlington may return at any moment.

LADY W. Don't come near me!

MRS. E. Oh! you are on the brink of ruin; you are on the brink of a hideous precipice. You must leave this place at once, my carriage is waiting at the corner of the street. You must come with me and drive straight home. [*LADY WINDERMERE throws off her cloak and flings it on the sofa.*] What are you doing?

LADY W. Mrs. Erlynne—if you had not come here, I would have gone back. But now that I see you, I feel that nothing in the whole world would induce me to live under the same roof as Lord Windermere. You fill me with horror. There is something about you that stirs the wildest rage within me,

And I know why you are here. My husband sent you to lure me back that I might serve as a blind to whatever relations exist between you and him.

MRS. E. Oh! You don't think that—you can't.

LADY W. Go back to my husband, Mrs. Erlynne. He belongs to you and not to me. I suppose he is afraid of a scandal. Men are such cowards. They outrage every law of the world, and are afraid of the world's tongue. But he had better prepare himself. He shall have a scandal. He shall have the worst scandal there has been in London for years. He shall see his name in every vile paper, mine on every hideous placard.

MRS. E. No—no—

LADY W. Yes! he shall. Had he come himself, I admit I would have gone back to the life of degradation you and he had prepared for me—I was going back—but to stay himself at home, and to send you as his messenger—oh! it was infamous—infamous.

MRS. E. [c.] Lady Windermere, you wrong me horribly—you wrong your husband horribly. He doesn't know you are here—he thinks you are safe in your own house. He thinks you are asleep in your own room. He never read the mad letter you wrote to him!

LADY W. [r.] Never read it!

MRS. E. No—he knows nothing about it.

LADY W. How simple you think me! [going to her.] You are lying to me!

MRS. E. [restraining herself.] I am not. I am telling you the truth.

LADY W. If my husband didn't read my letter, how is it that you are here? Who told you I had left the house you were shameless enough to enter? Who told you where I had gone to? My husband told you, and sent you to decoy me back. [Crosses L.]

MRS. E. [r. c.] Your husband has never seen the letter. I—saw it, I opened it. I—read it.

LADY W. [turning to her.] You opened a letter of mine to my husband? You wouldn't dare!

MRS. E. Dare! Oh! to save you

from the abyss into which you are falling, there is nothing in the world I would not dare, nothing in the whole world. Here is the letter. Your husband has never read it. He never shall read it. [going to fireplace.] It should never have been written.

[Tears it and throws it into the fire.]

LADY W. [with infinite contempt in her voice and look.] How do I know that was my letter after all? You seem to think the commonest device can take me in!

MRS. E. Oh! why do you disbelieve everything I tell you! What object do you think I have in coming here, except to save you from utter ruin, to save you from the consequence of a hideous mistake? That letter that is burning now was your letter. I swear it to you!

LADY W. [slowly.] You took good care to burn it before I had examined it. I cannot trust you. You, whose whole life is a lie, how could you speak the truth about anything? [Sits down.]

MRS. E. [hurriedly.] Think as you like about me—say what you choose against me, but go back, go back to the husband you love.

LADY W. [sullenly.] I do not love him!

MRS. E. You do, and you know that he loves you.

LADY W. He does not understand what love is. He understands it as little as you do—but I see what you want. It would be a great advantage for you to get me back. Dear Heaven! what a life I would have then! Living at the mercy of a woman who has neither mercy nor pity in her, a woman whom it is an infamy to meet, a degradation to know, a vile woman, a woman who comes between husband and wife!

MRS. E. [with a gesture of despair.] Lady Windermere, Lady Windermere, don't say such terrible things. You don't know how terrible they are, how terrible and how unjust. Listen, you must listen! Only go back to your husband, and I promise you never to communicate with him again on any pretext—never to see him—never to

have anything to do with his life or yours. The money that he gave me, he gave me not through love, but through hatred, not in worship, but in contempt. The hold I have over him—

LADY W. [*rising.*] Ah! you admit you have a hold!

MRS. E. Yes, and I will tell you what it is. It is his love for you, Lady Windermere.

LADY W. You expect me to believe that?

MRS. E. You must believe it! It is true. It is his love for you that has made him submit to—oh! call it what you like, tyranny, threats, anything you choose. But it is his love for you. His desire to spare you—shame, yes, shame and disgrace.

LADY W. What do you mean? You are insolent! What have I to do with you?

MRS. E. [*humbly.*] Nothing. I know it—but I tell you that your husband loves you—that you may never meet with such love again in your whole life—that such love you will never meet—and that if you throw it away, the day may come when you will starve for love and it will not be given to you, beg for love and it will be denied you—Oh! Arthur loves you!

LADY W. Arthur? And you tell me there is nothing between you?

MRS. E. Lady Windermere, before Heaven your husband is guiltless of all offense towards you! And I—I tell you that had it ever occurred to me that such a monstrous suspicion would have entered your mind, I would have died rather than have crossed your life or his—oh! died, gladly died!

[*Moves away to sofa R.*]

LADY W. You talk as if you had a heart. Women like you have no hearts. Heart is not in you. You are bought and sold.

[*Sits L. c.*]

MRS. E. [*starts, with a gesture of pain, then restrains herself, and comes over to where LADY WINDERMERE is sitting; as she speaks, she stretches out her hands towards her, but does not dare to touch her.*] Believe what you choose about me. I am not worth a

moment's sorrow. But don't spoil your beautiful young life on my account! You don't know what may be in store for you, unless you leave this house at once. You don't know what it is to fall into the pit, to be despised, mocked, abandoned, sneered at—to be an out-cast! to find the door shut against one, to have to creep in by hideous byways, afraid every moment lest the mask should be stripped from one's face, and all the while to hear the laughter, the horrible laughter of the world, a thing more tragic than all the tears the world has ever shed. You don't know what it is. One pays for one's sin, and then one pays again, and all one's life one pays. You must never know that.—As for me, if suffering be an expiation, then at this moment I have expiated all my faults, whatever they have been; for to-night you have made a heart in one who had it not, made it and broken it.—But let that pass. I may have wrecked my own life, but I will not let you wreck yours. You—why, you are a mere girl, you would be lost. You haven't got the kind of brains that enables a woman to get back. You have neither the wit nor the courage. You couldn't stand dishonor. No! Go back, Lady Windermere, to the husband who loves you, whom you love. You have a child, Lady Windermere. Go back to that child who even now, in pain or in joy, may be calling to you. [LADY WINDERMERE rises.] God gave you that child. He will require from you that you make his life fine, that you watch over him. What answer will you make to God if his life is ruined through you? Back to your house, Lady Windermere—your husband loves you. He has never swerved for a moment from the love he bears you. But even if he had a thousand loves, you must stay with your child. If he was harsh to you, you must stay with your child. If he ill-treated you, you must stay with your child. If he abandoned you, your place is with your child. [LADY WINDERMERE bursts into tears and buries her face in her hands; MRS. ERLYNNE rushes to her.] Lady Windermere!

LADY W. [*holding out her hands to her, helplessly, as a child might do.*] Take me home. Take me home.

MRS. E. [*is about to embrace her, then restrains herself; there is a look of wonderful joy in her face.*] Come! Where is your cloak? [*getting it from sofa.*] Here. Put it on. Come at once. [*They go to the door.*]

LADY W. Stop! Don't you hear voices?

MRS. E. No, no! There is no one!

LADY W. Yes, there is! Listen! Oh! that is my husband's voice! He is coming in! Save me! Oh, it's some plot! You have sent for him!

[*Voices outside.*]

MRS. E. Silence! I am here to save you if I can. But I fear it is too late! There! [*points to the curtain across the window.*] The first chance you have, slip out, if you ever get a chance!

LADY W. But you!

MRS. E. Oh! never mind me. I'll face them.

[*LADY WINDERMERE hides herself behind the curtain.*]

LORD A. [*outside.*] Nonsense, dear Windermere, you must not leave me!

MRS. E. Lord Augustus! Then it is I who am lost!

[*Hesitates for a moment, then looks round and sees door R., and exit through it.*]

[*Enter LORD DARLINGTON, MR. DUMBY, LORD WINDERMERE, LORD AUGUSTUS LORTON and CECIL GRAHAM.*]

DUMBY. What a nuisance their turning us out of the club at this hour! It's only two o'clock. [*sinks into a chair.*] The lively part of the evening is only just beginning.

[*Yawns and closes his eyes.*]

LORD W. It is very good of you, Lord Darlington, allowing Augustus to force our company on you, but I'm afraid I can't stay long.

LORD D. Really! I am so sorry! You'll take a cigar, won't you?

LORD W. Thanks! [*Sits down.*]

LORD A. [*to LORD WINDERMERE.*] My dear boy, you must not dream of

going. I have a great deal to talk to you about, of demmed importance, too.

[*Sits down with him at L. table.*]

CECIL G. Oh! we all know what that is! Tuppy can't talk about anything but Mrs. Erlynne!

LORD W. Well, that is no business of yours, is it, Cecil?

CECIL G. None! That is why it interests me. My own business always bores me to death. I prefer other people's.

LORD D. Have something to drink, you fellows. Cecil, you'll have a whiskey and soda?

CECIL G. Thanks. [*goes to the table with LORD DUMBY.*] Mrs. Erlynne looked very handsome to-night, didn't she?

LORD D. I am not one of her admirers.

CECIL G. I usen't to be, but I am now. Why! she actually made me introduce her to poor dear Aunt Caroline. I believe she is going to lunch there.

LORD D. [*in surprise.*] No?

CECIL G. She is, really.

LORD D. Excuse me, you fellows. I'm going away to-morrow. And I have to write a few letters.

[*Goes to writing table and sits down.*]

DUMBY. Clever woman, Mrs. Erlynne.

CECIL G. Hallo, Dumby! I thought you were asleep.

DUMBY. I am, I usually am!

LORD A. A very clever woman. Knows perfectly well what a demmed fool I am—knows it as well as I do myself. [*CECIL G. comes towards him laughing.*] Ah! you may laugh, my boy, but it is a great thing to come across a woman who thoroughly understands one.

DUMBY. It is an awfully dangerous thing. They always end by marrying one.

CECIL G. But I thought, Tuppy, you were never going to see her again. Yes! you told me so yesterday evening at the club. You said you'd heard—

[*Whispering to him.*]

LORD A. Oh, she's explained that.

CECIL G. And the Wiesbaden affair?

LORD A. She's explained that, too.

DUMBY. And her income, Tuppy? Has she explained that?

LORD A. [*in a very serious voice.*] She's going to explain that to-morrow.

[CECIL GRAHAM goes back to c. table.]

DUMBY. Awfully commercial, women nowadays. Our grandmothers threw their caps over the mills, of course, but, by Jove, their granddaughters only throw their caps over mills that can raise the wind for them.

LORD A. You want to make her out a wicked woman. She is not!

CECIL G. Oh! Wicked women bother one. Good women bore one. That is the only difference between them.

LORD D. [*puffing a cigar.*] Mrs. Erlynne has a future before her.

DUMBY. Mrs. Erlynne has a past before her.

LORD A. I prefer women with a past. They're always so demmed amusing to talk to.

CECIL G. Well, you'll have lots of topics of conversation with *her*, Tuppy.

[*Rising and going to him.*]

LORD A. You're getting annoying, dear boy; you're getting demmed annoying.

CECIL G. [*puts his hands on his shoulders.*] Now, Tuppy, you've lost your figure and you've lost your character. Don't lose your temper; you have only got one.

LORD A. My dear boy, if I wasn't the most good-natured man in London—

CECIL G. We'd treat you with more respect wouldn't we, Tuppy?

[*Strolls away.*]

DUMBY. The youth of the present day are quite monstrous. They have absolutely no respect for dyed hair.

[LORD AUGUSTUS looks round angrily.]

CECIL G. Mrs. Erlynne has a very great respect for dear Tuppy.

DUMBY. Then Mrs. Erlynne sets an admirable example to the rest of her sex. It is perfectly brutal the way

most women nowadays behave to men who are not their husbands.

LORD W. Dumby, you are ridiculous, and, Cecil, you let your tongue run away with you. You must leave Mrs. Erlynne alone. You don't really know anything about her, and you're always talking scandal against her.

CECIL G. [*coming towards him L. c.*] My dear Arthur, I never talk scandal. I only talk gossip.

LORD W. What is the difference between scandal and gossip?

CECIL G. Oh! gossip is charming! History is merely gossip. But scandal is gossip made tedious by morality. Now I never moralize. A man who moralizes is usually a hypocrite, and a woman who moralizes is invariably plain. There is nothing in the whole world so unbecoming to a woman as a Non-conformist conscience. And most women know it, I'm glad to say.

LORD A. Just my sentiments, dear boy, just my sentiments.

CECIL G. Sorry to hear it, Tuppy; whenever people agree with me, I always feel I must be wrong.

LORD A. My dear boy, when I was your age—

CECIL G. But you never were, Tuppy, and you never will be. [*goes up c.*] I say, Darlington, let us have some cards. You'll play, Arthur, won't you?

LORD W. No, thanks, Cecil.

DUMBY. [*with a sigh.*] Good heavens! how marriage ruins a man! It's as demoralizing as cigarettes, and far more expensive.

CECIL G. You'll play, of course, Tuppy?

LORD A. [*pouring himself out a brandy and soda at table.*] Can't, dear boy. Promised Mrs. Erlynne never to play or drink again.

CECIL G. Now, my dear Tuppy, don't be led astray into the paths of virtue. Reformed, you would be perfectly tedious. That is the worst of women. They always want one to be good. And if we are good, when they meet us, they don't love us at all. They like to find us quite irretrievably bad,

and to leave us quite unattractively good.

LORD D. [*rising from R. table, where he has been writing letters.*] They always do find us bad!

DUMBY. I don't think we are bad. I think we are all good except Tuppy.

LORD D. No, we are all in the gutter, but some of us are looking at the stars. [*Sits down at C. table.*]

DUMBY. We are all in the gutter, but some of us are looking at the stars? Upon my word, you are very romantic to-night, Darlington.

CECIL G. Too romantic! You must be in love. Who is the girl?

LORD D. The woman I love is not free, or thinks she isn't.

[*Glances instinctively at LORD WINDERMERE while he speaks.*]

CECIL G. A married woman, then! Well, there's nothing in the world like the devotion of a married woman. It's a thing no married man knows anything about.

LORD D. Oh! she doesn't love me. She is a good woman. She is the only good woman I have ever met in my life.

CECIL G. The only good woman you have ever met in your life?

LORD D. Yes!

CECIL G. [*lighting a cigarette.*] Well, you are a lucky fellow! Why, I have met hundreds of good women. I never seem to meet any but good women. The world is perfectly packed with good women. To know them is a middle-class education.

LORD D. This woman has purity and innocence. She has everything we men have lost.

CECIL G. My dear fellow, what on earth should we men do going about with purity and innocence? A carefully thought-out buttonhole is much more effective.

DUMBY. She doesn't really love you then?

LORD D. No, she does not!

DUMBY. I congratulate you, my dear fellow. In this world there are only two tragedies. One is not getting what one wants, and the other is get-

ting it. The last is much the worst, the last is a real tragedy! But I am interested to hear she does not love you. How long could you love a woman who didn't love you, Cecil?

CECIL G. A woman who didn't love me? Oh, all my life!

DUMBY. So could I. But it's so difficult to meet one.

LORD D. How can you be so conceited, Dumby?

DUMBY. I didn't say it as a matter of conceit. I said it as a matter of regret. I have been wildly, madly adored. I am sorry I have. It has been an immense nuisance. I should like to be allowed a little time to myself, now and then.

LORD A. [*looking round.*] Time to educate yourself, I suppose.

DUMBY. No, time to forget all I have learned. That is much more important, dear Tuppy.

[*LORD AUGUSTUS moves uneasily in his chair.*]

LORD D. What cynics you fellows are!

CECIL G. What is a cynic?

[*Sitting on the back of the sofa.*]

LORD D. A man who knows the price of everything, and the value of nothing.

CECIL G. And a sentimentalist, my dear Darlington, is a man who sees an absurd value in everything, and doesn't know the market price of any single thing.

LORD D. You always amuse me, Cecil. You talk as if you were a man of experience.

CECIL G. I am.

[*Moves up to front of fireplace.*]

LORD D. You are far too young!

CECIL G. That is a great error. Experience is a question of instinct about life. I have got it. Tuppy hasn't. Experience is the name Tuppy gives to his mistakes. That is all.

[*LORD AUGUSTUS looks round indignantly.*]

DUMBY. Experience is the name every one gives to their mistakes.

CECIL G. [*standing with his back to fireplace.*] One shouldn't commit any.

[Sees LADY WINDERMERE'S fan on sofa.]

DUMBY. Life would be very dull without them.

CECIL G. Of course you are quite faithful to this woman you are in love with, Darlington, to this good woman?

LORD D. Cecil, if one really loves a woman, all other women in the world become absolutely meaningless to one. Love changes one—I am changed.

CECIL G. Dear me! How very interesting. Tuppy, I want to talk to you.

[LORD AUGUSTUS takes no notice.]

DUMBY. It's no use talking to Tuppy. You might as well talk to a brick wall.

CECIL G. But I like talking to a brick wall—it's the only thing in the world that never contradicts me! Tuppy!

LORD A. Well, what is it? What is it?

[Rising and going over to CECIL GRAHAM.]

CECIL G. Come over here. I want you particularly. [aside.] Darlington has been moralizing and talking about the purity of love, and that sort of thing, and he has got some woman in his rooms all the time.

LORD A. No, really! really!

CECIL G. [in a low voice.] Yes, here is her fan. [Points to the fan.]

LORD A. [chuckling.] By Jove! By Jove!

LORD W. [up by door.] I am really off now, Lord Darlington. I am sorry you are leaving England so soon. Pray call on us when you come back! My wife and I will be charmed to see you!

LORD D. [up stage with LORD WINDERMERE.] I am afraid I shall be away for many years. Good-night!

CECIL G. Arthur!

LORD W. What?

CECIL G. I want to speak to you for a moment. No, do come!

LORD W. [putting on his coat.] I can't—I'm off!

CECIL G. It is something very particular. It will interest you enormously.

LORD W. [smiling.] It is some of your nonsense, Cecil.

CECIL G. It isn't. It isn't really!

LORD A. [going to him.] My dear fellow, you mustn't go yet. I have a lot to talk to you about. And Cecil has something to show you.

LORD W. [walking over.] Well, what is it?

CECIL G. Darlington has got a woman here in his rooms. Here is her fan. Amusing, isn't it? [A pause.]

LORD W. Good God!

[Seizes the fan—DUMBY rises.]

CECIL G. What is the matter?

LORD W. Lord Darlington!

LORD D. [turning round.] Yes!

LORD W. What is my wife's fan doing here in your rooms? Hands off, Cecil. Don't touch me.

LORD D. Your wife's fan?

LORD W. Yes, here it is!

LORD D. [walking towards him.] I don't know!

LORD W. You must know. I demand an explanation. [to CECIL GRAHAM.] Don't hold me, you fool.

LORD D. [aside.] She is here after all!

LORD W. Speak, sir! Why is my wife's fan here? Answer me, by God! I'll search your rooms, and if my wife's here, I'll— [Moves.]

LORD D. You shall not search my rooms. You have no right to do so. I forbid you.

LORD W. You scoundrel! I'll not leave your room till I have searched every corner of it! What moves behind that curtain?

[Rushes towards the curtain c.]

MRS. E. [enters behind R.] Lord Windermere!

LORD W. Mrs. Erlynne!

[Every one starts and turns round. LADY WINDERMERE slips out from behind the curtain and glides from the room L.]

MRS. E. I am afraid I took your wife's fan in mistake for my own, when I was leaving your house to-night. I am so sorry.

[Takes fan from him. LORD WINDERMERE looks at her in contempt.]

LORD DARLINGTON *in mingled astonishment and anger.* LORD AUGUSTUS *turns away.* The other men smile at each other.]

ACT IV

The setting is the same as in Act I.

LADY W. [*lying on sofa.*] How can I tell him? I can't tell him. It would kill me. I wonder what happened after I escaped from that horrible room. Perhaps she told them the true reason of her being there, and the real meaning of that—fatal fan of mine. Oh, if he knows—how can I look him in the face again? He would never forgive me. [*touches bell.*] How securely one thinks one lives—out of reach of temptation, sin, folly! And then suddenly—Oh! Life is terrible. It rules us, we do not rule it.

[*Enter ROSALIE R.*]

ROSALIE. Did your ladyship ring for me?

LADY W. Yes. Have you found out at what time Lord Windermere came in last night?

ROSALIE. His lordship did not come in till five o'clock.

LADY W. Five o'clock! He knocked at my door this morning, didn't he?

ROSALIE. Yes, my lady—at half past nine. I told him your ladyship was not awake yet.

LADY W. Did he say anything?

ROSALIE. Something about your ladyship's fan. I didn't quite catch what his lordship said. Has the fan been lost, my lady? I can't find it, and Parker says it was not left in any of the rooms. He has looked in all of them and on the terrace as well.

LADY W. It doesn't matter. Tell Parker not to trouble. That will do.

[*Exit ROSALIE.*]

LADY W. [*rising.*] She is sure to tell him. I can fancy a person doing a wonderful act of self-sacrifice, doing it spontaneously, recklessly, nobly—

and afterwards finding out that it costs too much. Why should she hesitate between her ruin and mine? How strange! I would have publicly disgraced her in my own house. She accepts public disgrace in the house of another to save me. . . . There is bitter irony in things, a bitter irony in the way we talk of good and bad women. . . . Oh, what a lesson! and what a pity that in life we only get our lessons when they are of no use to us! For even if she doesn't tell, I must. Oh! the shame of it, the shame of it. To tell it is to live through it all again. Actions are the first tragedy in life, words are the second. Words are perhaps the worst. Words are merciless. . . . Oh!

[*Starts as LORD WINDERMERE enters.*]

LORD W. [*kisses her.*] Margaret—how pale you look!

LADY W. I slept very badly.

LORD W. [*sitting on sofa with her.*] I am so sorry. I came in dreadfully late, and I didn't like to wake you. You are crying, dear.

LADY W. Yes, I am crying, for I have something to tell you, Arthur.

LORD W. My dear child, you are not well. You've been doing too much. Let us go away to the country. You'll be all right at Selby. The season is almost over. There is no use staying on. Poor darling! We'll go away to-day, if you like. [*rises.*] We can easily catch the 4.30. I'll send a wire to Fannen.

[*Crosses and sits down at table to write a telegram.*]

LADY W. Yes; let us go away to-day. No; I can't go away to-day. Arthur. There is some one I must see before I leave town—some one who has been kind to me.

LORD W. [*rising and leaning over sofa.*] Kind to you?

LADY W. Far more than that. [*rises and goes to him.*] I will tell you, Arthur, but only love me, love me as you used to love me.

LORD W. Used to? You are not thinking of that wretched woman who came here last night? [*coming round*

and sitting R. of her.] You don't still imagine—no, you couldn't.

LADY W. I don't. I know now I was wrong and foolish.

LORD W. It was very good of you to receive her last night—but you are never to see her again.

LADY W. Why do you say that?

[A pause.]

LORD W. *[holding her hand.]* Margaret, I thought Mrs. Erlynne was a woman more sinned against than sinning, as the phrase goes. I thought she wanted to be good, to get back into a place that she had lost by a moment's folly, to lead again a decent life. I believed what she told me—I was mistaken in her. She is bad—as bad as a woman can be.

LADY W. Arthur, Arthur, don't talk so bitterly about any woman. I don't think now that people can be divided into the good and the bad, as though they were two separate races or creations. What are called good women may have terrible things in them, mad moods of recklessness, assertion, jealousy, sin. Bad women, as they are termed, may have in them sorrow, repentance, pity, sacrifice. And I don't think Mrs. Erlynne a bad woman—I know she's not.

LORD W. My dear child, the woman is impossible. No matter what harm she tries to do us, you must never see her again. She is inadmissible anywhere.

LADY W. But I want to see her. I want her to come here.

LORD W. Never!

LADY W. She came here once as *your* guest. She must come now as *mine*. That is but fair.

LORD W. She should never have come here.

LADY W. *[rising.]* It is too late, Arthur, to say that now.

[Moves away.]

LORD W. *[rising.]* Margaret, if you knew where Mrs. Erlynne went last night, after she left this house, you would not sit in the same room with her. It was absolutely shameless, the whole thing.

LADY W. Arthur, I can't bear it any longer, I must tell you. Last night—

[Enter PARKER with a tray on which lie LADY WINDERMERE'S fan and a card.]

PARKER. Mrs. Erlynne has called to return your ladyship's fan which she took away by mistake last night. Mrs. Erlynne has written a message on the card.

LADY W. Oh, ask Mrs. Erlynne to be kind enough to come up. *[reads card.]* Say I shall be very glad to see her.

[Exit PARKER.]

She wants to see me, Arthur.

LORD W. *[takes card and looks at it.]* Margaret, I beg you not to. Let me see her first, at any rate. She's a very dangerous woman. She is the most dangerous woman I know. You don't realize what you're doing.

LADY W. It is right that I should see her.

LORD W. My child, you may be on the brink of a great sorrow. Don't go to meet it. It is absolutely necessary that I should see her before you do.

LADY W. Why should it be necessary?

[Enter PARKER.]

PARKER. Mrs. Erlynne.

[Enter MRS. ERLYNNE. Exit PARKER.]

MRS. E. How do you do, Lady Windermere? *[to LORD WINDERMERE.]* How do you do? Do you know, Lady Windermere, I am so sorry about your fan. I can't imagine how I made such a silly mistake. Most stupid of me. And as I was driving in your direction, I thought I would take the opportunity of returning your property in person, with many apologies for my carelessness, and of bidding you good-bye.

LADY W. Good-bye? *[moves towards sofa with MRS. ERLYNNE and sits down beside her.]* Are you going away, then, Mrs. Erlynne?

MRS. E. Yes; I am going to live abroad again. The English climate doesn't suit me. My—heart is affected

here, and that I don't like. I prefer living in the south. London is too full of fogs and—and serious people, Lord Windermere. Whether the fogs produce the serious people or whether the serious people produce the fogs, I don't know, but the whole thing rather gets on my nerves, and so I'm leaving this afternoon by the Club Train.

LADY W. This afternoon? But I wanted so much to come and see you.

MRS. E. How kind of you! But I am afraid I have to go.

LADY W. Shall I never see you again, Mrs. Erlynne?

MRS. E. I am afraid not. Our lives lie too far apart. But there is a little thing I would like you to do for me. I want a photograph of you, Lady Windermere—would you give me one? You don't know how gratified I should be.

LADY W. Oh, with pleasure. There is one on that table. I'll show it to you. [*Goes across to the table.*]

LORD W. [*coming up to Mrs. ERLYNNE and speaking in a low voice.*] It is monstrous your intruding yourself here after your conduct last night.

MRS. E. [*with an amused smile.*] My dear Windermere, manners before morals!

LADY W. [*returning.*] I'm afraid it is very flattering—I am not so pretty as that. [*Showing photograph.*]

MRS. E. You are much prettier. But haven't you got one of yourself with your little boy?

LADY W. I have. Would you prefer one of those?

MRS. E. Yes.

LADY W. I'll go and get it for you, if you'll excuse me for a moment. I have one upstairs.

MRS. E. So sorry, Lady Windermere, to give you so much trouble.

LADY W. [*moves to door R.*] No trouble at all, Mrs. Erlynne.

MRS. E. Thanks so much.

[*Exit LADY WINDERMERE R.*]

You seem rather out of temper this morning, Windermere. Why should you be? Margaret and I get on charmingly together.

LORD W. I can't bear to see you

with her. Besides, you have not told me the truth, Mrs. Erlynne.

MRS. E. I have not told *her* the truth, you mean.

LORD W. [*standing c.*] I sometimes wish you had. I should have been spared then the misery, the anxiety, the annoyance of the last six months. But rather than my wife should know—that the mother whom she was taught to consider as dead, the mother whom she has mourned as dead, is living—a divorced woman going about under an assumed name, a bad woman preying upon life, as I know you now to be—rather than that, I was ready to supply you with money to pay bill after bill, extravagance after extravagance, to risk what occurred yesterday, the first quarrel I have ever had with my wife. You don't understand what that means to me. How could you? But I tell you that the only bitter words that ever came from those sweet lips of hers were on your account, and I hate to see you next her. You sully the innocence that is in her. [*moves L. c.*] And then I used to think that with all your faults you were frank and honest. You are not.

MRS. E. Why do you say that?

LORD W. You made me get you an invitation to my wife's ball.

MRS. E. For my daughter's ball—yes.

LORD W. You came, and within an hour of your leaving the house, you are found in a man's rooms—you are disgraced before every one.

[*Goes up stage c.*]

MRS. E. Yes.

LORD W. [*turning round on her.*] Therefore I have a right to look upon you as what you are—a worthless, vicious woman. I have the right to tell you never to enter this house, never to attempt to come near my wife—

MRS. E. [*coldly.*] My daughter, you mean.

LORD W. You have no right to claim her as your daughter. You left her, abandoned her, when she was but a child in the cradle, abandoned her for your lover, who abandoned you in turn.

MRS. E. [*rising.*] Do you count that to his credit, Lord Windermere—or to mine?

LORD W. To his, now that I know you.

MRS. E. Take care—you had better be careful.

LORD W. Oh, I am not going to mince words for you. I know you thoroughly.

MRS. E. [*looking steadily at him.*] I question that.

LORD W. I do know you. For twenty years of your life you lived without your child, without a thought of your child. One day you read in the papers that she had married a rich man. You saw your hideous chance. You knew that to spare her the ignominy of learning that a woman like you was her mother, I would endure anything. You began your blackmailing.

MRS. E. [*shrugging her shoulders.*] Don't use ugly words, Windermere. They are vulgar. I saw my chance, it is true, and took it.

LORD W. Yes, you took it—and spoiled it all last night by being found out.

MRS. E. [*with a strange smile.*] You are quite right, I spoiled it all last night.

LORD W. And as for your blunder in taking my wife's fan from here, and then leaving it about in Darlington's rooms, it is unpardonable. I can't bear the sight of it now. I shall never let my wife use it again. The thing is soiled for me. You should have kept it, and not brought it back.

MRS. E. I think I shall keep it. [*goes up.*] It's extremely pretty. [*takes up fan.*] I shall ask Margaret to give it to me.

LORD W. I hope my wife will give it you.

MRS. E. Oh, I'm sure she will have no objection.

LORD W. I wish that at the same time she would give you a miniature she kisses every night before she prays—It's the miniature of a young, inno-

cent-looking girl with beautiful dark hair.

MRS. E. Ah, yes, I remember. How long ago that seems! [*goes to sofa and sits down.*] It was done before I was married. Dark hair and an innocent expression were the fashion then, Windermere! [*A pause.*]

LORD W. What do you mean by coming here this morning? What is your object?

[*Crossing L. C. and sitting.*]

MRS. E. [*with a note of irony in her voice.*] To bid good-bye to my dear daughter, of course. [LORD WINDERMERE bites his underlip in anger; MRS. ERLYNNE looks at him, and her voice and manner become serious; in her accents as she talks there is a note of deep tragedy; for a moment she reveals herself.] Oh, don't imagine I am going to have a pathetic scene with her, weep on her neck and tell her who I am, and all that kind of thing. I have no ambition to play the part of a mother. Only once in my life have I known a mother's feelings. That was last night. They were terrible—they made me suffer—they made me suffer too much. For twenty years, as you say, I have lived childless—I want to live childless still. [*hiding her feelings with a trivial laugh.*] Besides, my dear Windermere, how on earth could I pose as a mother with a grown-up daughter? Margaret is twenty-one, and I have never admitted that I am more than twenty-nine, or thirty at the most. Twenty-nine when there are pink shades, thirty when there are not. So you see what difficulties it would involve. No, as far as I am concerned, let your wife cherish the memory of this dead, stainless mother. Why should I interfere with her illusions? I find it hard enough to keep my own. I lost one illusion last night. I thought I had no heart. I find I have, and a heart doesn't suit me, Windermere. Somehow it doesn't go with modern dress. It makes one look old. [*takes up hand-mirror from table and looks into it.*] And it spoils one's career at critical moments.

LORD W. You fill me with horror—with absolute horror.

MRS. E. [*rising.*] I suppose, Windermere, you would like me to retire into a convent or become a hospital nurse or something of that kind, as people do in silly modern novels. That is stupid of you, Arthur; in real life we don't do such things—not as long as we have any good looks left, at any rate. No—what consoles one nowadays is not repentance, but pleasure. Repentance is quite out of date. And, besides, if a woman really repents, she has to go to a bad dressmaker, otherwise no one believes in her. And nothing in the world would induce me to do that. No; I am going to pass entirely out of your two lives. My coming into them has been a mistake—I discovered that last night.

LORD W. A fatal mistake.

MRS. E. [*smiling.*] Almost fatal.

LORD W. I am sorry now I did not tell my wife the whole thing at once.

MRS. E. I regret my bad actions. You regret your good ones—that is the difference between us.

LORD W. I don't trust you. I will tell my wife. It's better for her to know, and from me. It will cause her infinite pain—it will humiliate her terribly, but it's right that she should know.

MRS. E. You propose to tell her?

LORD W. I am going to tell her.

MRS. E. [*going up to him.*] If you do, I will make my name so infamous that it will mar every moment of her life. It will ruin her and make her wretched. If you dare to tell her, there is no depth of degradation I will not sink to, no pit of shame I will not enter. You shall not tell her—I forbid you.

LORD W. Why?

MRS. E. [*after a pause.*] If I said to you that I cared for her, perhaps loved her even—you would sneer at me, wouldn't you?

LORD W. I should feel it was not true. A mother's love means devotion, unselfishness, sacrifice. What could you know of such things?

MRS. E. You are right. What could

I know of such things? Don't let us talk any more about it; as for telling my daughter who I am, that I do not allow. It is my secret, it is not yours. If I make up my mind to tell her, and I think I will, I shall tell her before I leave this house—if not, I shall never tell her.

LORD W. [*angrily.*] Then let me beg of you to leave our house at once. I will make your excuses to Margaret.

[*Enter LADY WINDERMERE. She goes over to MRS. ERLYNNE with the photograph in her hand. LORD WINDERMERE moves to back of sofa, and anxiously watches MRS. ERLYNNE as the scene progresses.*]

LADY W. I am so sorry, Mrs. Erylynne, to have kept you waiting. I couldn't find the photograph anywhere. At last I discovered it in my husband's dressing-room—he had stolen it.

MRS. E. [*takes the photograph from her and looks at it.*] I am not surprised—it is charming. [*goes over to sofa with LADY WINDERMERE and sits down beside her; looks again at the photograph.*] And so that is your little boy! What is he called?

LADY W. Gerard, after my dear father.

MRS. E. [*laying the photograph down.*] Really?

LADY W. Yes. If it had been a girl, I would have called it after my mother. My mother had the same name as myself, Margaret.

MRS. E. My name is Margaret, too.

LADY W. Indeed!

MRS. E. Yes. [*pause.*] You are devoted to your mother's memory, Lady Windermere, your husband tells me.

LADY W. We all have ideals in life. At least we all should have. Mine is my mother.

MRS. E. Ideals are dangerous things. Realities are better. They wound, but they are better.

LADY W. [*shaking her head.*] If I lost my ideals, I should lose everything.

MRS. E. Everything?

LADY W. Yes. [Pause.]

MRS. E. Did your father often speak to you of your mother?

LADY W. No, it gave him too much pain. He told me how my mother had died a few months after I was born. His eyes filled with tears as he spoke. Then he begged me never to mention her name to him again. It made him suffer even to hear it. My father—my father really died of a broken heart. His was the most ruined life I know.

MRS. E. [*rising*.] I am afraid I must go now, Lady Windermere.

LADY W. [*rising*.] Oh no, don't.

MRS. E. I think I had better. My carriage must have come back by this time. I sent it to Lady Jedburgh's with a note.

LADY W. Arthur, would you mind seeing if Mrs. Erlynne's carriage has come back?

MRS. E. Pray don't trouble Lord Windermere, Lady Windermere.

LADY W. Yes, Arthur, do go, please.

[LORD WINDERMERE *hesitates for a moment, and looks at MRS. ERLYNNE. She remains quite impassive. He leaves the room.*]

[To MRS. ERLYNNE.] Oh, what am I to say to you? You saved me last night!

[*Goes toward her.*]

MRS. E. Hush—don't speak of it.

LADY W. I must speak of it. I can't let you think that I am going to accept this sacrifice. I am not. It is too great. I am going to tell my husband everything. It is my duty.

MRS. E. It is not your duty—at least you have duties to others besides him. You say you owe me something?

LADY W. I owe you everything.

MRS. E. Then pay your debt by silence. That is the only way in which it can be paid. Don't spoil the one good thing I have done in my life by telling it to any one. Promise me that what passed last night will remain a secret between us. You must not bring misery into your husband's life. Why

spoil his love? You must not spoil it. Love is easily killed. Oh, how easily love is killed! Pledge me your word, Lady Windermere, that you will *never* tell him. I insist upon it.

LADY W. [*with bowed head*.] It is your will, not mine.

MRS. E. Yes, it is my will. And never forget your child—I like to think of you as a mother. I like you to think of yourself as one.

LADY W. [*looking up*.] I always will now. Only once in my life I have forgotten my own mother—that was last night. Oh, if I had remembered her, I should not have been so foolish, so wicked.

MRS. E. [*with a slight shudder*.] Hush, last night is quite over.

[Enter LORD WINDERMERE.]

LORD W. Your carriage has not come back yet, Mrs. Erlynne.

MRS. E. It makes no matter. I'll take a hansom. There is nothing in the world so respectable as a good Shrewsbury and Talbot. And now, dear Lady Windermere, I am afraid it is really good-bye. [*moves up c.*] Oh, I remember. You'll think me absurd, but do you know, I've taken a great fancy to this fan that I was silly enough to run away with last night from your ball. Now, I wonder would you give it to me? Lord Windermere says you may. I know it is his present.

LADY W. Oh, certainly, if it will give you any pleasure. But it has my name on it. It has "Margaret" on it.

MRS. E. But we have the same Christian name.

LADY W. Oh, I forgot. Of course, do have it. What a wonderful chance our names being the same!

MRS. E. Quite wonderful. Thanks—it will always remind me of you.

[*Shakes hands with her.*]

[Enter PARKER.]

PARKER. Lord Augustus Lorton. Mrs. Erlynne's carriage has come.

[Enter LORD AUGUSTUS LORTON.]

LORD A. Good-morning, dear boy.
Good-morning, Lady Windermere.
[SEES MRS. ERLYNNE.] Mrs. Erlynne!

MRS. E. How do you do, Lord Augustus? Are you quite well this morning?

LORD A. [*coldly*.] Quite well, thank you, Mrs. Erlynne.

MRS. E. You don't look at all well, Lord Augustus. You stop up too late—it is so bad for you. You really should take more care of yourself. Good-bye, Lord Windermere. [*goes towards door with a bow to LORD AUGUSTUS; suddenly smiles, and looks back at him.*] Lord Augustus! Won't you see me to my carriage? You might carry the fan.

LORD W. Allow me!

MRS. E. No, I want Lord Augustus. I have a special message for the dear Duchess. Won't you carry the fan, Lord Augustus?

LORD A. If you really desire it, Mrs. Erlynne.

MRS. E. [*laughing*.] Of course I do. You'll carry it so gracefully. You would carry off anything gracefully, dear Lord Augustus.

[*When she reaches the door she looks back for a moment at LADY WINDERMERE. Their eyes meet. Then she turns, and exit c., followed by LORD AUGUSTUS.*]

LADY W. You will never speak against Mrs. Erlynne again, Arthur, will you?

LORD W. [*gravely*.] She is better than one thought her.

LADY W. She is better than I am.

LORD W. [*smiling as he strokes her hair*.] Child, you and she belong to different worlds. Into your world evil has never entered.

LADY W. Don't say that, Arthur. There is the same world for all of us, and good and evil, sin and innocence, go through it hand in hand. To shut one's eyes to half of life that one may live securely is as though one blinded one's self that one might walk with

more safety in a land of pit and precipice.

LORD W. [*moves down with her*.] Darling, why do you say that?

LADY W. [*sits on sofa*.] Because I, who had shut my eyes to life, came to the brink. And one who had separated us—

LORD W. We were never parted.

LADY W. We never must be again. Oh, Arthur, don't love me less, and I will trust you more. I will trust you absolutely. Let us go to Selby. In the Rose Garden at Selby, the roses are white and red.

[*Enter LORD AUGUSTUS LORTON.*]

LORD A. Arthur, she has explained everything! [*LADY WINDERMERE looks horribly frightened; LORD WINDERMERE starts; LORD AUGUSTUS takes LORD WINDERMERE by the arm, and brings him to front of stage.*] My dear fellow, she has explained every demmed thing. We all wronged her immensely. It was entirely for my sake she went to Darlington's rooms—called first at the club. Fact is, wanted to put me out of suspense, and being told I had gone on, followed—naturally—frightened when she heard a lot of men coming in—retired to another room—I assure you, most gratifying to me, the whole thing. We all behaved brutally to her. She is just the woman for me. Suits me down to the ground. All the condition she makes is that we live out of England—a very good thing too!—Demmed clubs, demmed climate, demmed cooks, demmed everything! Sick of it all.

LADY W. [*frightened*.] Has Mrs. Erlynne—?

LORD A. [*advancing towards her with a bow*.] Yes, Lady Windermere, Mrs. Erlynne has done me the honor of accepting my hand.

LORD W. Well, you are certainly marrying a very clever woman.

LADY W. [*taking her husband's hand*.] Ah! you're marrying a very good woman.

THE SECOND MRS. TANQUERAY *

SIR ARTHUR WING PINERO

CHARACTERS

AUBREY TANQUERAY.
PAULA.
ELLEEN.
CAYLEY DRUMMLE.
MRS. CORTELYON.
CAPTAIN HUGH ARDALE.
GORDON JAYNE, M.D.
FRANK MISQUITH, Q.C., M.P.
SIR GEORGE ORREYED, BART.
LADY ORREYED.
MORSE.

TIME—The present day.

The Scene of the First Act is laid at Mr. TANQUERAY's rooms, No. 2x, The Albany, in the month of November; the occurrences of the succeeding Acts take place at his house, "Highercoombe," near Willowmere, Surrey, during the early part of the following year.

ACT I

AUBREY TANQUERAY's chambers in the Albany—a richly and tastefully decorated room, elegantly and luxuriously furnished: on the right a large pair of doors opening into another room, on the left at the further end of the room a small door leading to a bed-chamber. A circular table is laid for a dinner for four persons, which has now reached the stage of dessert and coffee. Everything in the apartment suggests wealth and refinement. The fire is burning brightly.

[AUBREY TANQUERAY, MISQUITH, and JAYNE are seated at the din-

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ner table. AUBREY is forty-two, handsome, winning in manner, his speech and bearing retaining some of the qualities of young manhood. MISQUITH is about forty-seven, genial and portly. JAYNE is a year or two MISQUITH's senior; soft-speaking and precise—in appearance a type of the prosperous town physician. MORSE, AUBREY's servant, places a little cabinet of cigars and the spirit-lamp on the table beside AUBREY, and goes out.]

MIS. Aubrey, it is a pleasant yet dreadful fact to contemplate, but it's nearly fifteen years since I first dined with you. You lodged in Piccadilly in those days, over a hat-shop. Jayne, I met you at that dinner, and Cayley Drummle.

JAYNE. Yes, yes. What a pity it is that Cayley isn't here to-night.

AUB. Confound the old gossip! His empty chair has been staring us in the face all through dinner. I ought to have told Morse to take it away.

MIS. Odd, his sending no excuse.

AUB. I'll walk round to his lodgings later on and ask after him.

MIS. I'll go with you.

JAYNE. So will I.

AUB. [opening the cigar-cabinet.] Doctor, it's useless to tempt you, I know. Frank—[MISQUITH and AUBREY smoke.] I particularly wished Cayley Drummle to be one of us to-night. You two fellows and Jayne are my closest, my best friends—

MIS. My dear Aubrey!

JAYNE. I rejoice to hear you say so.

AUB. And I wanted to see the three

of you round this table. You can't guess the reason.

MIS. You desired to give us a most excellent dinner.

JAYNE. Obviously.

AUB. [*hesitatingly.*] Well—I—[*glancing at the clock.*]—Cayley won't turn up now.

JAYNE. H'm, hardly.

AUB. Then you two shall hear it. Doctor, Frank, this is the last time we are to meet in these rooms.

JAYNE. The last time?

MIS. You're going to leave the Albany?

AUB. Yes. You've heard me speak of a house I built in the country years ago, haven't you?

MIS. In Surrey.

AUB. Well, when my wife died I cleared out of that house and let it. I think of trying the place again.

MIS. But you'll go raving mad if ever you find yourself down there alone.

AUB. Ah, but I shan't be alone, and that's what I wanted to tell you. I'm going to be married.

JAYNE. Going to be married?

MIS. Married?

AUB. Yes—to-morrow.

JAYNE. To-morrow?

MIS. You take my breath away! My dear fellow, I—I—of course, I congratulate you.

JAYNE. And—and—so do I—heartily.

AUB. Thanks—thanks.

[*There is a moment or two of embarrassment.*]

MIS. Er—ah—this is an excellent cigar.

JAYNE. Ah—um—your coffee is remarkable.

AUB. Look here; I dare say you two old friends think this treatment very strange, very unkind. So I want you to understand me. You know a marriage often cools friendships. What's the usual course of things? A man's engagement is given out, he is congratulated, complimented upon his choice; the church is filled with troops of friends, and he goes away happily to a chorus of good wishes. He comes

back, sets up house in town or country, and thinks to resume the old associations, the old companionships. My dear Frank, my dear good doctor, it's very seldom that it can be done. Generally, a worm has begun to eat its way into those hearty, unreserved, pre-nuptial friendships; a damnable constraint sets in and acts like a wasting disease; and so, believe me, in nine cases out of ten a man's marriage severs for him more close ties than it forms.

MIS. Well, my dear Aubrey, I earnestly hope—

AUB. I know what you're going to say, Frank. I hope so, too. In the meantime let's face dangers. I've reminded you of the *usual* course of things, but my marriage isn't even the conventional sort of marriage likely to satisfy society. Now, Cayley's a bachelor, but you two men have wives. By the bye, my love to Mrs. Misquith and to Mrs. Jayne when you get home—don't forget that. Well, your wives may not—like—the lady I'm going to marry.

JAYNE. Aubrey, forgive me for suggesting that the lady you are going to marry may not like our wives—mine at least; I beg your pardon, Frank.

AUB. Quite so; then I must go the way my wife goes.

MIS. Come, come, pray don't let us anticipate that either side will be called upon to make such a sacrifice.

AUB. Yes, yes, let us anticipate it. And let us make up our minds to have no slow bleeding to death of our friendship. We'll end a pleasant chapter here to-night, and after to-night start afresh. When my wife and I settle down at Willowmere it's possible that we shall all come together. But if this isn't to be, for Heaven's sake let us recognize that it is simply because it *can't* be, and not wear hypocritical faces and suffer and be wretched. Doctor, Frank—[*holding out his hands, one to MISQUITH, the other to JAYNE*]—good luck to all of us!

MIS. But—but—do I understand we are to ask nothing? Not even the lady's name, Aubrey?

AUB. The lady, my dear Frank, belongs to the next chapter, and in that her name is Mrs. Aubrey Tanqueray.

JAYNE. [*raising his coffee-cup.*] Then, in an old-fashioned way, I propose a toast. Aubrey, Frank, I give you "The Next Chapter!"

[*They drink the toast, saying, "The Next Chapter!"*]

AUB. Doctor, find a comfortable chair; Frank, you too. As we're going to turn out by and by, let me scribble a couple of notes now while I think of them.

Mis. and JAYNE. Certainly—yes, yes.

AUB. It might slip my memory when I get back.

[*AUBREY sits at a writing-table at the other end of the room, and writes.*]

JAYNE. [*to MISQUITH in a whisper.*] Frank—[*MISQUITH quietly leaves his chair, and sits nearer to JAYNE.*] What is all this? Simply a morbid crank of Aubrey's with regard to ante-nuptial acquaintances?

Mis. H'm! Did you notice *one* expression he used?

JAYNE. Let me think—

Mis. "My marriage is not even the conventional sort of marriage likely to satisfy society."

JAYNE. Bless me, yes! What does that suggest?

Mis. That he has a particular rather than a general reason for anticipating estrangement from his friends, I'm afraid.

JAYNE. A horrible *mésalliance*! A dairy-maid who has given him a glass of milk during a day's hunting, or a little anæmic shopgirl! Frank, I'm utterly wretched!

Mis. My dear Jayne, speaking in absolute confidence, I have never been more profoundly depressed in my life.

[*MORSE enters.*]

MORSE. [*announcing.*] Mr. Drummle.

[*CAYLEY DRUMMLE enters briskly. He is a neat little man of about five-and-forty, in manner bright,*

airy, debonair, but with an undercurrent of seriousness. MORSE retires.]

DRUM. I'm in disgrace; nobody realizes that more thoroughly than I do. Where's my host?

AUB. [*who has risen.*] Cayley.

DRUM. [*shaking hands with him.*] Don't speak to me till I have tendered my explanation. A harsh word from anybody would unman me.

[*MISQUITH and JAYNE shake hands with DRUMMLE.*]

AUB. Have you dined?

DRUM. No—unless you call a bit of fish, a cutlet, and a pancake dining.

AUB. Cayley, this is disgraceful.

JAYNE. Fish, a cutlet, and a pancake will require a great deal of explanation.

Mis. Especially the pancake. My dear friend, your case looks miserably weak.

DRUM. Hear me! hear me!

JAYNE. Now then!

Mis. Come!

AUB. Well!

DRUM. It so happens that to-night I was exceptionally early in dressing for dinner.

Mis. For which dinner—the fish and cutlet?

DRUM. For *this* dinner, of course—really, Frank! At a quarter to eight, in fact, I found myself trimming my nails, with ten minutes to spare. Just then enter my man with a note—would I hasten, as fast as cab could carry me, to old Lady Orreyed in Bruton Street?—"sad trouble." Now, recollect, please, I had ten minutes on my hands, old Lady Orreyed was a very dear friend of my mother's, and was in some distress.

AUB. Cayley, come to the fish and cutlet!

Mis. and JAYNE. Yes, yes, and the pancake.

DRUM. Upon my word! Well, the scene in Bruton Street beggars description; the women servants looked scared, the men drunk; and there was poor old Lady Orreyed on the floor of

her boudoir like Queen Bess among her pillows.

AUB. What's the matter?

DRUM. [*to everybody.*] You know George Orreyed?

MIS. Yes.

JAYNE. I've met him.

DRUM. Well, he's a thing of the past.

AUB. Not dead!

DRUM. Certainly, in the worst sense. He's married Mabel Hervey.

MIS. What!

DRUM. It's true—this morning. The poor mother shows me his letter—a dozen curt words, and some of those ill-spelt.

MIS. [*walking up to the fireplace.*] I'm very sorry.

JAYNE. Pardon my ignorance—who was Mabel Hervey?

DRUM. You don't—? Oh, of course not. Miss Hervey—Lady Orreyed, as she now is—was a lady who would have been, perhaps has been, described in the reports of the Police or the Divorce Court as an actress. Had she belonged to a lower stratum of our advanced civilization she would, in the event of judicial inquiry, have defined her calling with equal justification as that of a dressmaker. To do her justice, she is a type of a class which is immortal. Physically, by the strange caprice of creation, curiously beautiful; mentally, she lacks even the strength of deliberate viciousness. Paint her portrait, it would symbolize a creature perfectly patrician; lance a vein of her superbly-modelled arm, you would get the poorest *vin ordinaire*! Her affections, emotions, impulses, her very existence—a burlesque! Flaxen, five-and-twenty, and feebly frolicsome; anybody's, in less gentle society I should say everybody's, property! That, doctor, was Miss Hervey who is the new Lady Orreyed. Dost thou like the picture?

MIS. Very good, Cayley! Bravo!

AUB. [*laying his hand on DRUM-MLE's shoulder.*] You'd scarcely believe it, Jayne, but none of us really know anything about this lady, our

gay young friend here, I suspect, least of all.

DRUM. Aubrey, I applaud your chivalry.

AUB. And perhaps you'll let me finish a couple of letters which Frank and Jayne have given me leave to write. [*returning to the writing-table.*] Ring for what you want, like a good fellow!

[AUBREY resumes his writing.]

MIS. [*to DRUMMLE.*] Still, the fish and the cutlet remain unexplained.

DRUM. Oh, the poor old woman was so weak that I insisted upon her taking some food, and felt there was nothing for it but to sit down opposite her. The fool! the blackguard!

MIS. Poor Orreyed! Well, he's gone under for a time.

DRUM. For a time! My dear Frank, I tell you he has absolutely ceased to be.

[AUBREY, who has been writing busily, turns his head towards the speakers and listens. His lips are set, and there is a frown upon his face.]

For all practical purposes you may regard him as the late George Orreyed. To-morrow the very characteristics of his speech, as we remember them, will have become obsolete.

JAYNE. But surely, in the course of years, he and his wife will outlive—

DRUM. No, no, doctor, don't try to upset one of my settled beliefs. You may dive into many waters, but there is *one* social Dead Sea—!

JAYNE. Perhaps you're right.

DRUM. Right! Good God! I wish you could prove me otherwise! Why for years I've been sitting, and watching and waiting.

MIS. You're in form to-night, Cayley. May we ask where you've been in the habit of squandering your useful leisure?

DRUM. Where? On the shore of that same sea.

MIS. And, pray, what have you been waiting for?

DRUM. For some of my best friends to come up. [AUBREY utters a half-

stified exclamation of impatience; then he hurriedly gathers up his papers from the writing-table. The three men turn to him.] Eh?

AUB. Oh, I—I'll finish my letters in the other room if you'll excuse me for five minutes. Tell Cayley the news. *[He goes out.]*

DRUM. *[hurrying to the door.]* My dear fellow, my jabbering has disturbed you! I'll never talk again as long as I live!

MIS. Close the door, Cayley. *[DRUMMLE shuts the door.]*

JAYNE. Cayley—

DRUM. *[advancing to the dinner table.]* A smoke, a smoke, or I perish! *[Selects a cigar from the little cabinet.]*

JAYNE. Cayley, marriages are in the air.

DRUM. Are they? Discover the bacillus, doctor, and destroy it.

JAYNE. I mean, among our friends.

DRUM. Oh, Nugent Warrinder's engagement to Lady Alice Tring. I've heard of that. They're not to be married till the spring.

JAYNE. Another marriage that concerns us a little takes place to-morrow.

DRUM. Whose marriage?

JAYNE. Aubrey's.

DRUM. Aub—! *[looking towards MISQUITH.]* Is it a joke?

MIS. No.

DRUM. *[looking from MISQUITH to JAYNE.]* To whom?

MIS. He doesn't tell us.

JAYNE. We three were asked here to-night to receive the announcement. Aubrey has some theory that marriage is likely to alienate a man from his friends, and it seems to me he has taken the precaution to wish us good-bye.

MIS. No, no.

JAYNE. Practically, surely.

DRUM. *[thoughtfully.]* Marriage in general, does he mean, or *this* marriage?

JAYNE. That's the point. Frank says—

MIS. No, no, no; I feared it suggested—

JAYNE. Well, well. *[to DRUMMLE.]* What do you think of it?

DRUM. *[after a slight pause.]* Is there a light there? *[lighting his cigar.]* He—wraps the lady—in mystery—you say?

MIS. Most modestly.

DRUM. Aubrey's—not—a very— young man.

JAYNE. Forty-three.

DRUM. Ah! *L'age critique!*

MIS. A dangerous age—yes, yes.

DRUM. When you two fellows go home, do you mind leaving me behind here?

MIS. Not at all.

JAYNE. By all means.

DRUM. All right. *[anxiously.]* Deuce take it, the man's second marriage mustn't be another mistake!

[With his head bent he walks up to the fireplace.]

JAYNE. You knew him in his short married life, Cayley. Terribly unsatisfactory, wasn't it?

DRUM. Well—*[looking at the door.]* I quite closed that door?

MIS. Yes.

[Settles himself on the sofa; JAYNE is seated in an arm-chair.]

DRUM. *[smoking with his back to the fire.]* He married a Miss Herriott; that was in the year eighteen—confound dates—twenty years ago. She was a lovely creature—by Jove, she was; by religion a Roman Catholic. She was one of your cold sort, you know—all marble arms and black velvet. I remember her with painful distinctness as the only woman who ever made me nervous.

MIS. Ha, ha!

DRUM. He loved her—to distraction, as they say. Jupiter, how fervently that poor devil courted her! But I don't believe she allowed him even to squeeze her fingers. She was an iceberg! As for kissing, the mere contact would have given him chapped lips. However, he married her and took her away, the latter greatly to my relief.

JAYNE. Abroad, you mean?

DRUM. Eh? Yes. I imagine he

gratified her by renting a villa in Lapland, but I don't know. After a while they returned, and then I saw how woefully Aubrey had miscalculated results.

JAYNE. Miscalculated—?

DRUM. He had reckoned, poor wretch, that in the early days of marriage she would thaw. But she didn't. I used to picture him closing his doors and making up the fire in the hope of seeing her features relax. Bless her, the thaw never set in! I believe she kept a thermometer in her stays and always registered ten degrees below zero. However, in time a child came—a daughter.

JAYNE. Didn't that—?

DRUM. Not a bit of it; it made matters worse. Frightened at her failure to stir up in him some sympathetic religious belief, she determined upon strong measures with regard to the child. He opposed her for a miserable year or so, but she wore him down, and the insensible little brat was placed in a convent, first in France, then in Ireland. Not long afterwards the mother died, strangely enough, of fever, the only warmth, I believe, that ever came to that woman's body.

MIS. Don't, Cayley!

JAYNE. The child is living, we know.

DRUM. Yes, if you choose to call it living. Miss Tanqueray—a young woman of nineteen now—is in the Loretto convent at Armagh. She professes to have found her true vocation in a religious life, and within a month or two will take final vows.

MIS. He ought to have removed his daughter from the convent when the mother died.

DRUM. Yes, yes, but absolutely at the end there was reconciliation between husband and wife, and she won his promise that the child should complete her conventual education. He reaped his reward. When he attempted to gain his girl's confidence and affection he was too late; he found he was dealing with the spirit of the mother. You remember his visit to Ireland last month?

JAYNE. Yes.

DRUM. That was to wish his girl good-bye.

MIS. Poor fellow!

DRUM. He sent for me when he came back. I think he must have had a lingering hope that the girl would relent—would come to life, as it were—at the last moment, for, for an hour or so, in this room, he was terribly shaken. I'm sure he'd clung to that hope from the persistent way in which he kept breaking off in his talk to repeat one dismal word, as if he couldn't realize his position without dinning this damned word into his head.

JAYNE. What word was that?

DRUM. Alone—alone.

[AUBREY enters.]

AUB. A thousand apologies!

DRUM. [*gayly.*] We are talking about you, my dear Aubrey.

[*During the telling of the story, MISQUITH has risen and gone to the fire, and DRUMMLE has thrown himself full-length on the sofa. AUBREY now joins MISQUITH and JAYNE.*]

AUB. Well, Cayley, are you surprised?

DRUM. Surp—! I haven't been surprised for twenty years.

AUB. And you're not angry with me?

DRUM. Angry! [*rising.*] Because you considerably withhold the name of a lady with whom it is now the object of my life to become acquainted? My dear fellow, you pique my curiosity, you give zest to my existence! And as for a wedding, who on earth wants to attend that familiar and probably draughty function? Ugh! My cigar's out.

AUB. Let's talk about something else.

MIS. [*looking at his watch.*] Not to-night, Aubrey.

AUB. My dear Frank!

MIS. I go up to Scotland to-morrow, and there are some little matters—

JAYNE. I am off too.

AUB. No, no.

JAYNE. I must: I have to give a look to a case in Clifford Street on my way home.

AUB. [*going to the door.*] Well! [MISQUITH and JAYNE exchange looks with DRUMMLE; AUBREY opens the door and calls.] Morse, hats and coats! I shall write to you all next week from Genoa or Florence. Now, doctor, Frank, remember, my love to Mrs. Misquith and to Mrs. Jayne!

[MORSE enters with hats and coats.]

MIS. and JAYNE. Yes, yes—yes, yes.

AUB. And your young people!

[As MISQUITH and JAYNE put on their coats there is the clatter of careless talk.]

JAYNE. Cayley, I meet you at dinner on Sunday.

DRUM. At the Stratfields'. That's very pleasant.

MIS. [*putting on his coat with AUBREY's aid.*] Ah-h!

AUB. What's wrong?

MIS. A twinge. Why didn't I go to Aix in August?

JAYNE. [*shaking hands with DRUMMLE.*] Good-night, Cayley.

DRUM. Good-night, my dear doctor!

MIS. [*shaking hands with DRUMMLE.*] Cayley, are you in town for long?

DRUM. Dear friend, I'm nowhere for long. Good-night.

MIS. Good-night.

[AUBREY, JAYNE, and MISQUITH go out, followed by MORSE; the hum of talk is continued outside.]

AUB. A cigar, Frank?

MIS. No, thank you.

AUB. Going to walk, doctor?

JAYNE. If Frank will.

MIS. By all means.

AUB. It's a cold night.

[The door is closed. DRUMMLE remains standing with his coat on his arm and his hat in his hands.]

DRUM. [*to himself, thoughtfully.*] Now then! What the devil!—

[AUBREY returns.]

AUB. [*eyeing DRUMMLE a little awkwardly.*] Well, Cayley?

DRUM. Well, Aubrey?

[AUBREY walks up to the fire and stands looking into it.]

AUB. You're not going, old chap?

DRUM. [*sitting.*] No.

AUB. [*after a slight pause, with a forced laugh.*] Hah, Cayley, I never thought I should feel—shy—with you.

DRUM. Why do you?

AUB. Never mind.

DRUM. Now, I can quite understand a man wishing to be married in the dark, as it were.

AUB. You can?

DRUM. In your place I should very likely adopt the same course.

AUB. You think so?

DRUM. And if I intended marrying a lady not prominently in society, as I presume you do—as I presume you do—

AUB. Well?

DRUM. As I presume you do, I'm not sure that I should tender her for preliminary dissection at afternoon tea-tables.

AUB. No?

DRUM. In fact, there is probably only one person—were I in your position to-night—with whom I should care to chat the matter over.

AUB. Who's that?

DRUM. Yourself, of course. [*going to AUBREY and standing beside him.*] Of course, yourself, old friend.

AUB. [*after a pause.*] I must seem a brute to you, Cayley. But there are some acts which are hard to explain, hard to defend—

DRUM. To defend—

AUB. Some acts which one must trust to time to put right.

[DRUMMLE watches him for a moment, then takes up his hat and coat.]

DRUM. Well, I'll be moving.

AUB. Cayley! Confound you and your old friendship! Do you think I forget it? Put your coat down! Why did you stay behind here? Cayley, the lady I am going to marry is the lady—who is known as—Mrs. Jarman.

[*There is a pause.*]

DRUM. [*in a low voice.*] Mrs. Jarman! are you serious?

[*He walks up to the fireplace, where he leans upon the mantelpiece uttering something like a groan.*]

AUB. As you've got this out of me I give you leave to say all you care to say. Come, we'll be plain with each other. You know Mrs. Jarman?

DRUM. I first met her at—what does it matter?

AUB. Yes, yes, everything! Come!

DRUM. I met her at Homburg, two—three seasons ago.

AUB. Not as Mrs. Jarman?

DRUM. No.

AUB. She was then—?

DRUM. Mrs. Dartry.

AUB. Yes. She has also seen you in London, she says.

DRUM. Certainly.

AUB. In Alford Street. Go on.

DRUM. Please!

AUB. I insist.

DRUM. [*with a slight shrug of the shoulders.*] Some time last year I was asked by a man to sup at his house, one night after the theater.

AUB. Mr. Selwyn Ethurst—a bachelor.

DRUM. Yes.

AUB. You were surprised therefore to find Mr. Ethurst aided in his cursed hospitality by a lady.

DRUM. I was unprepared.

AUB. The lady you had known as Mrs. Dartry? [DRUMMLE *inclines his head silently.*] There is something of a yachting cruise in the Mediterranean, too, is there not?

DRUM. I joined Peter Jarman's yacht at Marseilles, in the Spring, a month before he died.

AUB. Mrs. Jarman was on board?

DRUM. She was a kind hostess.

AUB. And an old acquaintance?

DRUM. Yes.

AUB. You have told your story.

DRUM. With your assistance.

AUB. I have put you to the pain of telling it to show you that this is not the case of a blind man entrapped by

an artful woman. Let me add that Mrs. Jarman has no legal right to that name; that she is simply Miss Ray—Miss Paula Ray.

DRUM. [*after a pause.*] I should like to express my regret, Aubrey, for the way in which I spoke of George Orreyed's marriage.

AUB. You mean you compare Lady Orreyed with Miss Ray? [DRUMMLE *is silent.*] Oh, of course! To you, Cayley, all women who have been roughly treated, and who dare to survive by borrowing a little of our philosophy, are alike. You see in the crowd of the ill-used only one pattern; you can't detect the shades of goodness, intelligence, even nobility there. Well, how should you? The crowd is dimly lighted! And, besides, yours is the way of the world.

DRUM. My dear Aubrey, I *live* in the world.

AUB. The name we give our little parish of St. James's.

DRUM. [*laying a hand on AUBREY'S shoulder.*] And you are quite prepared, my friend, to forfeit the esteem of your little parish?

AUB. I avoid mortification by shifting from one parish to another. I give up Pall Mall for the Surrey hills; leave off varnishing my boots, and double the thickness of the soles.

DRUM. And your skin—do you double the thickness of that also?

AUB. I know you think me a fool, Cayley—you needn't infer that I'm a coward into the bargain. No! I know what I'm doing, and I do it deliberately, defiantly. I'm alone: I injure no living soul by the step I'm going to take, and so you can't urge the one argument which might restrain me. Of course, I don't expect you to think compassionately, fairly even, of the woman whom I—whom I am drawn to—

DRUM. My dear Aubrey, I assure you I consider Mrs.—Miss Jarman—Mrs. Ray—Miss Ray—delightful. But I confess there is a form of chivalry which I gravely distrust, especially in a man of—our age.

AUB. Thanks. I've heard you say that from forty till fifty a man is at heart either a stoic or a satyr.

DRUM. [*protestingly.*] Ah! now—

AUB. I am neither. I have a temperate, honorable affection for Mrs. Jarman. She has never met a man who has treated her well—I intend to treat her well. That's all. And in a few years, Cayley, if you've not quite forsaken me, I'll prove to you that it's possible to rear a life of happiness, of good repute, on a—miserable foundation.

DRUM. [*offering his hand.*] Do prove it!

AUB. [*taking his hand.*] We have spoken too freely of—of Mrs. Jarman. I was excited—angry. Please forget it!

DRUM. My dear Aubrey, when we next meet I shall remember nothing but my respect for the lady who bears your name.

[*MORSE enters, closing the door behind him carefully.*]

AUB. What is it?

MORSE. [*hesitatingly.*] May I speak to you, sir? [*in an undertone.*] Mrs. Jarman, sir.

AUB. [*softly to MORSE.*] Mrs. Jarman! Do you mean she is at the lodge in her carriage?

MORSE. No, sir—here. [*AUBREY looks towards DRUMMLE, perplexed.*] There's a nice fire in your—in that room, sir.

[*Glancing in the direction of the door leading to the bedroom.*]

AUB. [*between his teeth, angrily.*] Very well. [*MORSE retires.*]

DRUM. [*looking at his watch.*] A quarter to eleven—horrible! [*taking up his hat and coat.*] Must get to bed—up late every night this week. [*AUBREY assists DRUMMLE with his coat.*] Thank you. Well, good-night, Aubrey. I feel I've been dooced serious, quite out of keeping with myself; pray overlook it.

AUB. [*kindly.*] Ah, Cayley!

DRUM. [*putting on a neck-handkerchief.*] And remember that, after all, I'm merely a spectator in life; nothing

more than a man at a play, in fact; only, like the old-fashioned playgoer, I love to see certain characters happy and comfortable at the finish. You understand?

AUB. I think I do.

DRUM. Then, for as long as you can, old friend, will you—keep a stall for me?

AUB. Yes, Cayley.

DRUM. [*gayly.*] Ah, ha! Good-night! [*bustling to the door.*] Don't bother! I'll let myself out! Good-night! God bless yer!

[*He goes out; AUBREY follows him. MORSE enters by the other door, carrying some unopened letters, which after a little consideration he places on the mantelpiece against the clock. AUBREY returns.*]

AUB. Yes?

MORSE. You hadn't seen your letters that came by the nine o'clock post, sir; I've put 'em where they'll catch your eye by and by.

AUB. Thank you.

MORSE. [*hesitatingly.*] Gunter's cook and waiter have gone, sir. Would you prefer me to go to bed?

AUB. [*frowning.*] Certainly not.

MORSE. Very well, sir.

[*He goes out.*]

AUB. [*opening the upper door.*] Paula! Paula!

[*PAULA enters and throws her arms round his neck. She is a young woman of about twenty-seven: beautiful, fresh, innocent-looking. She is in superb evening dress.*]

PAULA. Dearest!

AUB. Why have you come here?

PAULA. Angry?

AUB. Yes—no. But it's eleven o'clock.

PAULA. [*laughing.*] I know.

AUB. What on earth will Morse think?

PAULA. Do you trouble yourself about what servants think?

AUB. Of course.

PAULA. Goose! They're only ma-

chines made to wait upon people—and to give evidence in the Divorce Court. [*looking round.*] Oh, indeed! A snug little dinner!

AUB. Three men.

PAULA. [*suspiciously.*] Men?

AUB. Men.

PAULA. [*penitently.*] Ah! [*sitting at the table.*] I'm so hungry.

AUB. Let me get you some game pie, or some—

PAULA. No, no, hungry for this. What beautiful fruit! I love fruit when it's expensive. [*he clears a space on the table, places a plate before her, and helps her to fruit.*] I haven't dined, Aubrey dear.

AUB. My poor girl! Why?

PAULA. In the first place, I forgot to order any dinner, and my cook, who has always loathed me, thought he'd pay me out before he departed.

AUB. The beast!

PAULA. That's precisely what I—

AUB. No, Paula!

PAULA. What I told my maid to call him. What next will you think of me?

AUB. Forgive me. You must be starved.

PAULA. [*eating fruit.*] I didn't care. As there was nothing to eat, I sat in my best frock, with my toes on the dining-room fender, and dreamt, oh, such a lovely dinner party.

AUB. Dear lonely little woman!

PAULA. It was perfect. I saw you at the end of a very long table, opposite me, and we exchanged sly glances now and again over the flowers. We were host and hostess, Aubrey, and had been married about five years.

AUB. [*kissing her hand.*] Five years.

PAULA. And on each side of us was the nicest set imaginable—you know, dearest, the sort of men and women that can't be imitated.

AUB. Yes, yes. Eat some more fruit.

PAULA. But I haven't told you the best part of my dream.

AUB. Tell me.

PAULA. Well, although we had been married only such a few years, I seemed to know by the look on their faces that none of our guests had ever

heard anything—anything—anything peculiar about the fascinating hostess.

AUB. That's just how it will be, Paula. The world moves so quickly. That's just how it will be.

PAULA. [*with a little grimace.*] I wonder! [*glancing at the fire.*] Ugh! Do throw another log on.

AUB. [*mending the fire.*] There! But you mustn't be here long.

PAULA. Hospitable wretch! I've something important to tell you. No, stay where you are. [*turning from him, her face averted.*] Look here, that was my dream, Aubrey; but the fire went out while I was dozing, and I woke up with a regular fit of the shivers. And the result of it all was that I ran upstairs and scribbled you a letter.

AUB. Dear baby!

PAULA. Remain where you are. [*taking a letter from her pocket.*] This is it. I've given you an account of myself, furnished you with a list of my adventures since I—you know. [*weighing the letter in her hand.*] I wonder if it would go for a penny. Most of it you're acquainted with; I've told you a good deal, haven't I?

AUB. Oh, Paula!

PAULA. What I haven't told you I dare say you've heard from others. But in case they've omitted anything—the dears—it's all here.

AUB. In Heaven's name, why must you talk like this to-night?

PAULA. It may save discussion by and by, don't you think? [*holding out the letter.*] There you are.

AUB. No, dear, no.

PAULA. Take it. [*he takes the letter.*] Read it through after I've gone, and then—read it again, and turn the matter over in your mind finally. And if, even at the very last moment, you feel you—oughtn't to go to church with me, send a messenger to Pont Street, any time before eleven to-morrow, telling me that you're afraid, and I—I'll take the blow.

AUB. Why, what—what do you think I am?

PAULA. That's it. It's because I know you're such a dear good fellow

that I want to save you the chance of ever feeling sorry you married me. I really love you so much, Aubrey, that to save you that, I'd rather you treated me as—as the others have done.

AUB. *[turning from her with a cry.]* Oh!

PAULA. *[after a slight pause.]* I suppose I've shocked you. I can't help it if I have.

[She sits, with assumed languor and indifference. He turns to her, advances, and kneels by her.]

AUB. My dearest, you don't understand me. I—I can't bear to hear you always talking about—what's done with. I tell you I'll never remember it; Paula, can't you dismiss it? Try. Darling, if we promise each other to forget, to forget, we're bound to be happy. After all, it's a mechanical matter; the moment a wretched thought enters your head, you quickly think of something bright—it depends on one's will. Shall I burn this, dear? *[referring to the letter he holds in his hand.]* Let me, let me!

PAULA. *[with a shrug of the shoulders.]* I don't suppose there's much that's new to you in it,—just as you like.

[He goes to the fire and burns the letter.]

AUB. There's an end of it. *[returning to her.]* What's the matter?

PAULA. *[rising coldly.]* Oh, nothing! I'll go and put my cloak on.

AUB. *[detaining her.]* What is the matter?

PAULA. Well, I think you might have said, "You're very generous, Paula," or at least, "Thank you, dear," when I offered to set you free.

AUB. *[catching her in his arms.]* Ah!

PAULA. Ah! ah! Ha! ha! It's all very well, but you don't know what it cost me to make such an offer. I do so want to be married.

AUB. But you never imagined—?

PAULA. Perhaps not. And yet I did think of what I'd do at the end of our acquaintance if you had preferred to behave like the rest.

[Taking a flower from her bodice.]

AUB. Hush!

PAULA. Oh, I forgot!

AUB. What would you have done when we parted?

PAULA. Why, killed myself.

AUB. Paula, dear!

PAULA. It's true. *[putting the flower in his buttonhole.]* Do you know, I feel certain I should make away with myself if anything serious happened to me.

AUB. Anything serious! What, has nothing ever been serious to you, Paula?

PAULA. Not lately; not since a long while ago. I made up my mind then to have done with taking things seriously. If I hadn't, I— However, we won't talk about that.

AUB. But now, now, life will be different to you, won't it—quite different? Eh, dear?

PAULA. Oh, yes, now. Only, Aubrey, mind you keep me always happy.

AUB. I will try to.

PAULA. I know I couldn't swallow a second big dose of misery. I know that if ever I felt wretched again—truly wretched—I should take a leaf out of Connie Tirlmont's book. You remember? They found her—

[With a look of horror.]

AUB. For God's sake, don't let your thoughts run on such things!

PAULA. *[laughing.]* Ha, ha, how scared you look! There, think of the time! Dearest, what will my coachman say? My cloak!

[She runs off, gayly, by the upper door. AUBREY looks after her for a moment, then he walks up to the fire and stands warming his feet at the bars. As he does so he raises his head and observes the letters upon the mantelpiece. He takes one down quickly.]

AUB. Ah! Ellean! *[opening the letter and reading.]* "My dear father, —A great change has come over me. I believe my mother in Heaven has spoken to me, and counseled me to turn to you in your loneliness. At any rate,

your words have reached my heart, and I no longer feel fitted for this solemn life. I am ready to take my place by you. Dear father, will you receive me?
—ELLEAN."

[PAULA reënters, dressed in a handsome cloak. He stares at her as if he hardly realized her presence.]

PAULA. What are you staring at? Don't you admire my cloak?

AUB. Yes.

PAULA. Couldn't you wait till I'd gone before reading your letters?

AUB. [putting the letter away.] I beg your pardon.

PAULA. Take me downstairs to the carriage. [slipping her arm through his.] How I tease you! To-morrow! I'm so happy! [They go out.]

ACT II

A morning-room in AUBREY TANQUERAY's house, "Highercoombe," near Willowmere, Surrey—a bright and prettily furnished apartment of irregular shape, with double doors opening into a small hall at the back, another door on the left, and a large recessed window through which is obtained a view of extensive grounds. Everything about the room is charming and graceful. The fire is burning in the grate, and a small table is tastefully laid for breakfast. It is a morning in early spring, and the sun is streaming in through the window.

[AUBREY and PAULA are seated at breakfast, and AUBREY is silently reading his letters. Two servants, a man and a woman, hand dishes and then retire. After a little while AUBREY puts his letters aside and looks across to the window.]

AUB. Sunshine! Spring!

PAULA. [glancing at the clock.] Exactly six minutes.

AUB. Six minutes?

PAULA. Six minutes, Aubrey dear, since you made your last remark.

AUB. I beg your pardon: I was reading my letters. Have you seen Ellean this morning?

PAULA. [coldly.] Your last observation but one was about Ellean.

AUB. Dearest, what shall I talk about?

PAULA. Ellean breakfasted two hours ago, Morgan tells me, and then went out walking with her dog.

AUB. She wraps up warmly, I hope; this sunshine is deceptive.

PAULA. I ran about the lawn last night, after dinner, in satin shoes. Were you anxious about me?

AUB. Certainly.

PAULA. [melting.] Really?

AUB. You make me wretchedly anxious; you delight in doing incautious things. You are incurable.

PAULA. Ah, what a beast I am! [going to him and kissing him, then glancing at the letters by his side.] A letter from Cayley?

AUB. He is staying very near here, with Mrs. ———. Very near here.

PAULA. With the lady whose chimneys we have the honor of contemplating from our windows?

AUB. With Mrs. Cortelyon—Yes.

PAULA. Mrs. Cortelyon! The woman who might have set the example of calling on me when we first threw out roots in this deadly-lively soil! Deuce take Mrs. Cortelyon!

AUB. Hush! my dear girl!

PAULA. [returning to her seat.] Oh, I know she's an old acquaintance of yours—and of the first Mrs. Tanqueray. And she joins the rest of 'em in slapping the second Mrs. Tanqueray in the face. However, I have my revenge—she's six-and-forty, and I wish nothing worse to happen to any woman.

AUB. Well, she's going to town, Cayley says here, and his visit's at an end. He's coming over this morning to call on you. Shall we ask him to transfer himself to us? Do say yes.

PAULA. Yes.

AUB. [gladly.] Ah, ha! old Cayley.

PAULA. [*coldly.*] He'll amuse *you*.

AUB. And you too.

PAULA. Because you find a companion, shall I be boisterously hilarious?

AUB. Come, come! He talks London, and you know you like that.

PAULA. London! London or Heaven! which is farther from me?

AUB. Paula!

PAULA. Oh! Oh, I am so bored, Aubrey!

AUB. [*gathering up his letters and going to her, leaning over her shoulder.*] Baby, what can I do for you?

PAULA. I suppose, nothing. You have done all you can for me.

AUB. What do you mean?

PAULA. You have married me.

[*He walks away from her thoughtfully, to the writing table. As he places his letters on the table he sees an addressed letter, stamped for the post, lying on the blotting-book; he picks it up.*]

AUB. [*in an altered tone.*] You've been writing this morning before breakfast?

PAULA. [*looking at him quickly, then away again.*] Er—that letter.

AUB. [*with the letter in his hand.*] To Lady Orreyed. Why?

PAULA. Why not? Mabel's an old friend of mine.

AUB. Are you—corresponding?

PAULA. I heard from her yesterday. They've just returned from the Riviera. She seems happy.

AUB. [*sarcastically.*] That's good news.

PAULA. Why are you always so cutting about Mabel? She's a kind-hearted girl. Everything's altered; she even thinks of letting her hair go back to brown. She's Lady Orreyed. She's married to George. What's the matter with her?

AUB. [*turning away.*] Oh!

PAULA. You drive me mad sometimes with the tone you take about things! Great goodness, if you come to that, George Orreyed's wife isn't a bit worse than yours! [*he faces her*

suddenly.] I suppose I needn't have made that observation.

AUB. No, there was scarcely a necessity.

[*He throws the letter on to the table, and takes up the newspaper.*]

PAULA. I am very sorry.

AUB. All right, dear.

PAULA. [*trifling with the letter.*] I—I'd better tell you what I've written. I meant to do so, of course. I—I've asked the Orreyeds to come and stay with us. [*he looks at her, and lets the paper fall to the ground in a helpless way.*] George was a great friend of Cayley's; I'm sure he would be delighted to meet them here.

AUB. [*laughing mirthlessly.*] Ha, ha, ha! They say Orreyed has taken to tipping at dinner. Heavens above!

PAULA. Oh! I've no patience with you! You'll kill me with this life! [*she selects some flowers from a vase on the table, cuts and arranges them, and fastens them in her bodice.*] What is my existence, Sunday to Saturday? In the morning, a drive down to the village, with the groom, to give my orders to the tradespeople. At lunch, you and Ellean. In the afternoon, a novel, the newspapers; if fine, another drive—if fine! Tea—you and Ellean. Then two hours of dusk; then dinner—you and Ellean. Then a game of Bésique, you and I, while Ellean reads a religious book in a dull corner. Then a yawn from me, another from you, a sigh from Ellean; three figures suddenly rise—"Good-night, good-night, good-night!" [*imitating a kiss.*] "God bless you!" Ah!

AUB. Yes, yes, Paula—yes, dearest—that's what it is *now*. But by and by, if people begin to come round us—

PAULA. Hah! That's where we've made the mistake, my friend Aubrey! [*pointing to the window.*] Do you believe these people will *ever* come round us? Your former crony, Mrs. Cortelyon? Or the grim old vicar, or that wife of his whose huge nose is posi-

tively indecent? Or the Ullathornes, or the Gollans, or Lady William Petres? I know better! And when the young ones gradually take the place of the old, there will still remain the sacred tradition that the dreadful person who lives at the top of the hill is never, under any circumstances, to be called upon! And so we shall go on here, year in and year out, until the sap is run out of our lives, and we're stale and dry and withered from sheer, solitary respectability. Upon my word, I wonder we didn't see that we should have been far happier if we'd gone in for the devil-may-care, café-living sort of life in town! After all, I have a set, and you might have joined it. It's true, I did want, dearly, dearly, to be a married woman, but where's the pride in being a married woman among married women who are—married! If— [*seeing that AUBREY's head has sunk into his hands.*] Aubrey! My dear boy! You're not—crying?

[*He looks up, with a flushed face. ELLEAN enters, dressed very simply for walking. She is a low-voiced, grave girl of about nineteen, with a face somewhat resembling a Madonna. Towards PAULA her manner is cold and distant.*]

AUB. [*in an undertone.*] Ellean!

ELLEAN. Good-morning, papa. Good-morning, Paula.

[*PAULA puts her arms round ELLEAN and kisses her. ELLEAN makes little response.*]

PAULA. Good-morning. [*brightly.*] We've been breakfasting this side of the house, to get the sun.

[*She sits at the piano and rattles at a gay melody. Seeing that PAULA's back is turned to them, ELLEAN goes to AUBREY and kisses him; he returns the kiss almost furtively. As they separate, the servants reënter, and proceed to carry out the breakfast table.*]

AUB. [*to ELLEAN.*] I guess where you've been: there's some gorse clinging to your frock.

ELLEAN. [*removing a sprig of gorse from her skirt.*] Rover and I walked nearly as far as Black Moor. The poor fellow has a thorn in his pad; I am going upstairs for my tweezers.

AUB. Ellean! [*she returns to him.*] Paula is a little depressed—out of sorts. She complains that she has no companion.

ELLEAN. I am with Paula nearly all the day, papa.

AUB. Ah, but you're such a little mouse. Paula likes cheerful people about her.

ELLEAN. I'm afraid I am naturally rather silent; and it's so difficult to seem to be what one is not.

AUB. I don't wish that, Ellean.

ELLEAN. I will offer to go down to the village with Paula this morning—shall I?

AUB. [*touching her hand gently.*] Thank you—do.

ELLEAN. When I've looked after Rover, I'll come back to her.

[*She goes out; PAULA ceases playing, and turns on the music-stool, looking at AUBREY.*]

PAULA. Well, have you and Ellean had your little confidence?

AUB. Confidence?

PAULA. Do you think I couldn't feel it, like a pain between my shoulders?

AUB. Ellean is coming back in a few minutes to be with you. [*bending over her.*] Paula, Paula dear, is this how you keep your promise?

PAULA. Oh! [*rising impatiently, and crossing swiftly to the settee, where she sits, moving restlessly.*] I can't keep my promise; I am jealous; it won't be smothered. I see you looking at her, watching her; your voice drops when you speak to her. I know how fond you are of that girl, Aubrey.

AUB. What would you have? I've no other home for her. She is my daughter.

PAULA. She is your saint. Saint Ellean!

AUB. You have often told me how good and sweet you think her.

PAULA. Good!—Yes! Do you imagine that makes me less jealous?

[*going to him and clinging to his arm.*]
AUBREY, there are two sorts of affection—the love for a woman you respect, and the love for the woman you—love. She gets the first from you: I never can.

AUB. Hush, hush! you don't realize what you say.

PAULA. If Ellean cared for me only a little, it would be different. I shouldn't be jealous then. Why doesn't she care for me?

AUB. She—she—she will, in time.

PAULA. You can't say that without stuttering.

AUB. Her disposition seems a little unresponsive; she resembles her mother in many ways; I can see it every day.

PAULA. She's marble. It's a shame. There's not the slightest excuse; for all she knows, I'm as much a saint as she—only married. Dearest, help me to win her over!

AUB. Help you?

PAULA. You can. Teach her that it is her duty to love me; she hangs on to every word you speak. I'm sure, Aubrey, that the love of a nice woman who believed me to be like herself would do me a world of good. You'd get the benefit of it as well as I. It would soothe me; it would make me less horribly restless; it would take this—this—mischievous feeling from me. [*coaxingly.*] Aubrey!

AUB. Have patience; everything will come right.

PAULA. Yes, if you help me.

AUB. In the meantime you will tear up your letter to Lady Orreyed, won't you?

PAULA. [*kissing his hand.*] Of course I will—anything!

AUB. Ah, thank you, dearest! [*laughing.*] Why, good gracious!—ha, ha!—just imagine "Saint Ellean" and that woman side by side!

PAULA. [*going back with a cry.*] Ah!

AUB. What?

PAULA. [*passionately.*] It's Ellean you're considering, not me! It's all Ellean with you! Ellean! Ellean!

[*ELLEAN reënters.*]

ELLEAN. Did you call me, Paula? [*clenching his hands, AUBREY turns away and goes out.*] Is papa angry?

PAULA. I drive him distracted, sometimes. There, I confess it!

ELLEAN. Do you? Oh, why do you!

PAULA. Because I—because I'm jealous.

ELLEAN. Jealous?

PAULA. Yes—of you. [*ELLEAN is silent.*] Well, what do you think of that?

ELLEAN. I knew it; I've seen it. It hurts me dreadfully. What do you wish me to do? Go away?

PAULA. Leave us? [*beckoning her with a motion of the head.*] Look here! [*ELLEAN goes to PAULA slowly and unresponsively.*] You could cure me of my jealousy very easily. Why don't you—like me?

ELLEAN. What do you mean by—like you? I don't understand.

PAULA. Love me.

ELLEAN. Love is not a feeling that is under one's control. I shall alter as time goes on, perhaps. I didn't begin to love my father deeply till a few months ago, and then I obeyed my mother.

PAULA. Ah, yes, you dream things, don't you—see them in your sleep? You fancy your mother speaks to you?

ELLEAN. When you have lost your mother it is a comfort to believe that she is dead only to this life, that she still watches over her child. I do believe that of my mother.

PAULA. Well, and so you haven't been bidden to love me?

ELLEAN. [*after a pause, almost inaudibly.*] No.

PAULA. Dreams are only a hash-up of one's day-thoughts, I suppose you know. Think intently of anything, and it's bound to come back to you at night. I don't cultivate dreams myself.

ELLEAN. Ah, I knew you would only sneer!

PAULA. I'm not sneering; I'm speaking the truth. I say that if you cared for me in the daytime I should soon

make friends with those nightmares of yours. Ellean, why don't you try to look on me as your second mother? Of course there are not many years between us, but I'm ever so much older than you—in experience. I shall have no children of my own, I know that; it would be a real comfort to me if you would make me feel we belonged to each other. Won't you? Perhaps you think I'm odd—not nice. Well, the fact is I've two sides to my nature, and I've let the one almost smother the other. A few years ago I went through some trouble, and since then I haven't shed a tear. I believe if you put your arms around me just once I should run upstairs and have a good cry. There, I've talked to you as I've never talked to a woman in my life. Ellean, you seem to fear me. Don't! Kiss me!

[With a cry, almost of despair, ELLEAN turns from PAULA and sinks on to the settee, covering her face with her hands.]

PAULA. *[indignantly.]* Oh! Why is it! How dare you treat me like this? What do you mean by it? What do you mean?

[A SERVANT enters.]

SERV. Mr. Drummle, ma'am.

[CAYLEY DRUMMLE, in riding-dress, enters briskly. The SERVANT retires.]

PAULA. *[recovering herself.]* Well, Cayley!

DRUM. *[shaking hands with her cordially.]* How are you? *[shaking hands with ELLEAN, who rises.]* I saw you in the distance an hour ago, in the gorse near Stapleton's.

ELLEAN. I didn't see you, Mr. Drummle.

DRUM. My dear Ellean, it is my experience that no charming young lady of nineteen ever does see a man of forty-five. *[laughing.]* Ha, Ha!

ELLEAN. *[going to the door.]* Paula, papa wishes me to drive down to the village with you this morning. Do you care to take me?

PAULA. *[coldly.]* Oh, by all means. Pray tell Watts to balance the cart for three. *[ELLEAN goes out.]*

DRUM. How's Aubrey?

PAULA. Very well—when Ellean's about the house.

DRUM. And you? I needn't ask.

PAULA. *[walking away to the window.]* Oh, a dog's life, my dear Cayley, mine.

DRUM. Eh?

PAULA. Doesn't that define a happy marriage? I'm sleek, well-kept, well-fed, never without a bone to gnaw and fresh straw to lie upon. *[gazing out of the window.]* Oh, dear me!

DRUM. H'm! Well, I heartily congratulate you on your kennel. The view from the terrace here is superb.

PAULA. Yes; I can see London.

DRUM. London! Not quite so far, surely?

PAULA. I can. Also the Mediterranean, on a fine day. I wonder what Algiers looks like this morning from the sea! *[impulsively.]* Oh, Cayley, do you remember those jolly times on board Peter Jarman's yacht when we lay off—? *[stopping suddenly, seeing DRUMMLE staring at her.]* Good gracious! What are we talking about!

[AUBREY enters.]

AUB. *[to DRUMMLE.]* Dear old chap! Has Paula asked you?

PAULA. Not yet.

AUB. We want you to come to us, now that you're leaving Mrs. Cortelyon—at once, to-day. Stay a month, as long as you please—eh, Paula?

PAULA. As long as you can possibly endure it—do, Cayley.

DRUM. *[looking at AUBREY.]* Delighted. *[to PAULA.]* Charming of you to have me.

PAULA. My dear man, you're a blessing. I must telegraph to London for more fish! A strange appetite to cater for! Something to do, to do, to do!

[She goes out in a mood of almost childish delight.]

DRUM. *[eyeing AUBREY.]* Well?

AUB. *[with a wearied, anxious look.]* Well, Cayley?

DRUM. How are you getting on?

AUB. My position doesn't grow less difficult. I told you, when I met you last week, of this feverish, jealous attachment of Paula's for Ellean?

DRUM. Yes. I hardly know why, but I came to the conclusion that you don't consider it an altogether fortunate attachment.

AUB. Ellean doesn't respond to it.

DRUM. These are early days. Ellean will warm towards your wife by and by.

AUB. Ah, but there's the question, Cayley!

DRUM. What question?

AUB. The question which positively distracts me. Ellean is so different from—most women; I don't believe a purer creature exists out of heaven. And I—I ask myself, am I doing right in exposing her to the influence of poor Paula's light, careless nature?

DRUM. My dear Aubrey!

AUB. That shocks you! So it does me. I assure you I long to urge my girl to break down the reserve which keeps her apart from Paula, but somehow I can't do it—well, I don't do it. How can I make you understand? But when you come to us you'll understand quickly enough. Cayley, there's hardly a subject you can broach on which poor Paula hasn't some strange out-of-the-way thought to give utterance to; some curious, warped notion. They are not mere worldly thoughts—unless, good God! they belong to the little hellish world which our blackguardism has created: no, her ideas have too little calculation in them to be called worldly. But it makes it the more dreadful that such thoughts should be ready, spontaneous; that expressing them has become a perfectly natural process; that her words, acts even, have almost lost their proper significance for her, and seem beyond her control. Ah, and the pain of listening to it all from the woman one loves, the woman one hoped to make happy and contented, who is really and truly a good woman, as it were, maimed! Well, this is my burden, and I shouldn't speak to you of it

but for my anxiety about Ellean. Ellean! What is to be her future? It is in my hands; what am I to do? Cayley, when I remember how Ellean comes to me, from another world I always think,—when I realize the charge that's laid on me, I find myself wishing, in a sort of terror, that my child were safe under the ground!

DRUM. My dear Aubrey, aren't you making a mistake?

AUB. Very likely. What is it?

DRUM. A mistake, not in regarding your Ellean as an angel, but in believing that, under any circumstances, it would be possible for her to go through life without getting her white robe—shall we say, a little dusty at the hem? Don't take me for a cynic: I am sure there are many women upon earth who are almost divinely innocent; but being on earth, they must send their robes to the laundry occasionally. Ah, and it's right that they should have to do so, for what can they learn from the checking of their little washing-bills but lessons of charity? Now I see but two courses open to you for the disposal of your angel.

AUB. Yes?

DRUM. You must either restrict her to a paradise which is, like every earthly paradise, necessarily somewhat imperfect, or treat her as an ordinary flesh-and-blood young woman, and give her the advantages of that society to which she properly belongs.

AUB. Advantages?

DRUM. My dear Aubrey, of all forms of innocence mere ignorance is the least admirable. Take my advice, let her walk and talk and suffer and be healed with the great crowd. Do it, and hope that she'll some day meet a good, honest fellow who'll make her life complete, happy, secure. Now you see what I'm driving at.

AUB. A sanguine programme, my dear Cayley! Oh, I'm not pooh-poohing it. Putting sentiment aside, of course I know that a fortunate marriage for Ellean would be the best—perhaps the only—solution of my diffi-

culty. But you forget the danger of the course you suggest.

DRUM. Danger?

AUB. If Ellean goes among men and women, how can she escape from learning, sooner or later, the history of—poor Paula's—old life?

DRUM. H'm! You remember the episode of the Jeweler's Son in the Arabian Nights? Of course you don't. Well, if your daughter lives, she *can't* escape—what you're afraid of. [AUBREY gives a half-stifled exclamation of pain.] And when she does hear the story, surely it would be better that she should have some knowledge of the world to help her to understand it.

AUB. To understand!

DRUM. To understand, to—philosophize.

AUB. To philosophize?

DRUM. Philosophy is toleration, and it is only one step from toleration to forgiveness.

AUB. You're right, Cayley; I believe you always are. Yes, yes. But, even if I had the courage to attempt to solve the problem of Ellean's future in this way, I—I'm helpless.

DRUM. How?

AUB. What means have I now of placing my daughter in the world I've left?

DRUM. Oh, some friend—some woman friend.

AUB. I have none; they're gone.

DRUM. You're wrong there; I know one—

AUB. [listening.] That's Paula's cart. Let's discuss this again.

DRUM. [going up to the window and looking out.] It isn't the dog-cart. [turning to AUBREY.] I hope you'll forgive me, old chap.

AUB. What for?

DRUM. Whose wheels do you think have been cutting ruts in your immaculate drive?

[A SERVANT enters.]

SERV. [to AUBREY.] Mrs. Cortelyon, sir.

AUB. Mrs. Cortelyon! [after a short pause.] Very well. [the SERV-

ANT withdraws.] What on earth is the meaning of this?

DRUM. Ahem! While I've been our old friend's guest, Aubrey, we have very naturally talked a good deal about you and yours.

AUB. Indeed, have you?

DRUM. Yes; and Alice Cortelyon has arrived at the conclusion that it would have been far kinder had she called on Mrs. Tanqueray long ago. She's going abroad for Easter before settling down in London for the season, and I believe she has come over this morning to ask for Ellean's companionship.

AUB. Oh, I see! [frowning.] Quite a friendly little conspiracy, my dear Cayley!

DRUM. Conspiracy! Not at all, I assure you. [laughing.] Ha, ha!

[ELLEAN enters from the hall with MRS. CORTELYON, a handsome, good-humored, spirited woman of about forty-five.]

ELLEAN. Papa—

MRS. C. [to AUBREY, shaking hands with him heartily.] Well, Aubrey, how are you? I've just been telling this great girl of yours that I knew her when she was a sad-faced, pale baby. How is Mrs. Tanqueray? I have been a bad neighbor, and I'm here to beg forgiveness. Is she indoors?

AUB. She's upstairs putting on a hat, I believe.

MRS. C. [sitting comfortably.] Ah! [she looks round; DRUMMLE and ELLEAN are talking together in the hall.] We used to be very frank with each other, Aubrey. I suppose the old footing is no longer possible, eh?

AUB. If so, I'm not entirely to blame, Mrs. Cortelyon.

MRS. C. Mrs. Cortelyon? H'm! No, I admit it. But you must make some little allowance for me, *Mr. Tanqueray*. Your first wife and I, as girls, were like two cherries on one stalk, and then I was the confidential friend of your married life. That post, perhaps, wasn't altogether a sinecure. And now—well, when a woman gets to my age

I suppose she's a stupid, prejudiced, conventional creature. However, I've got over it and—[*giving him her hand*]—I hope you'll be enormously happy and let me be a friend once more.

AUB. Thank you, Alice.

MRS. C. That's right. I feel more cheerful than I've done for weeks. But I suppose it would serve me right if the second Mrs. Tanqueray showed me the door. Do you think she will?

AUB. [*listening.*] Here is my wife. [MRS. CORTELYON rises, and PAULA enters, dressed for driving; she stops abruptly on seeing MRS. CORTELYON.] Paula, dear, Mrs. Cortelyon has called to see you.

[PAULA starts, looks at MRS. CORTELYON irresolutely, then after a slight pause barely touches MRS. CORTELYON'S extended hand.]

PAULA. [*whose manner now alternates between deliberate insolence and assumed sweetness.*] Mrs. —? What name, Aubrey?

AUB. Mrs. Cortelyon.

PAULA. Cortelyon? Oh, yes. Cortelyon.

MRS. C. [*carefully guarding herself throughout against any expression of resentment.*] Aubrey ought to have told you that Alice Cortelyon and he are very old friends.

PAULA. Oh, very likely he has mentioned the circumstance. I have quite a wretched memory.

MRS. C. You know we are neighbors, Mrs. Tanqueray.

PAULA. Neighbors? Are we really? Won't you sit down? [*they both sit.*] Neighbors! That's most interesting!

MRS. C. Very near neighbors. You can see my roof from your windows.

PAULA. I fancy I have observed a roof. But you have been away from home; you have only just returned.

MRS. C. I? What makes you think that?

PAULA. Why, because it is two months since we came to Highercombe, and I don't remember your having called.

MRS. C. Your memory is now terribly accurate. No, I've not been away

from home, and it is to explain my neglect that I am here, rather unceremoniously, this morning.

PAULA. Oh, to explain—quite so. [*with mock solicitude.*] Ah, you've been very ill; I ought to have seen that before.

MRS. C. Ill!

PAULA. You look dreadfully pulled down. We poor women show illness so plainly in our faces, don't we?

AUB. [*anxiously.*] Paula dear, Mrs. Cortelyon is the picture of health.

MRS. C. [*with some asperity.*] I have never felt better in my life.

PAULA. [*looking around innocently.*] Have I said anything awkward? Aubrey, tell Mrs. Cortelyon how stupid and thoughtless I always am!

MRS. C. [*to DRUMMLE, who is now standing close to her.*] Really, Cayley—! [*he soothes her with a nod and smile and a motion of his finger to his lip.*] Mrs. Tanqueray, I am afraid my explanation will not be quite so satisfactory as either of those you have just helped me to. You may have heard—but, if you have heard, you have doubtless forgotten—that twenty years ago, when your husband first lived here, I was a constant visitor at Highercombe.

PAULA. Twenty years ago—fancy! I was a naughty little child then.

MRS. C. Possibly. Well, at that time, and till the end of her life, my affections were centered upon the lady of this house.

PAULA. Were they? That was very sweet of you.

[ELLEAN approaches MRS. CORTELYON, listening intently to her.]

MRS. C. I will say no more on that score, but I must add this: when, two months ago you came here, I realized, perhaps for the first time, that I was a middle-aged woman, and that it had become impossible for me to accept without some effort a breaking-in upon many tender associations. There, Mrs. Tanqueray, that is my confession. Will you try to understand it and pardon me?

PAULA. [*watching ELLEAN,—sneeringly.*] Ellean dear, you appear to be

very interested in Mrs. Cortelyon's reminiscences; I don't think I can do better than make you my mouthpiece—there is such sympathy between us. What do you say—can we bring ourselves to forgive Mrs. Cortelyon for neglecting us for two weary months?

MRS. C. [*to ELLEAN, pleasantly.*] Well, Ellean? [*with a little cry of tenderness ELLEAN impulsively sits beside MRS. CORTELYON and takes her hand.*] My dear child!

PAULA. [*in an undertone to AUBREY.*] Ellean isn't so very slow in taking to Mrs. Cortelyon!

MRS. C. [*to PAULA and AUBREY.*] Come, this encourages me to broach my scheme. Mrs. Tanqueray, it strikes me that you two good people are just now excellent company for each other, while Ellean would perhaps be glad of a little peep into the world you are anxious to avoid. Now, I'm going to Paris to-morrow for a week or two before settling down in Chester Square, so—don't gasp, both of you!—if this girl is willing, and you have made no other arrangements for her, will you let her come with me to Paris, and afterwards remain with me in town during the season? [*ELLEAN utters an exclamation of surprise; PAULA is silent.*] What do you say?

AUB. Paula—Paula dear. [*hesitatingly.*] My dear Mrs. Cortelyon, this is wonderfully kind of you; I am really at a loss to—eh, Cayley?

DRUM. [*watching PAULA apprehensively.*] Kind! Now I must say I don't think so! I begged Alice to take me to Paris, and she declined! I am thrown over for Ellean! Ha! ha!

MRS. C. [*laughing.*] What nonsense you talk, Cayley!

[*The laughter dies out.*]

PAULA remains quite still.]

AUB. Paula dear.

PAULA. [*slowly collecting herself.*] One moment. I—I don't quite— [*to MRS. CORTELYON.*] You propose that Ellean leaves Highercombe almost at once, and remains with you some months?

MRS. C. It would be a mercy to me.

You can afford to be generous to a desolate old widow. Come, Mrs. Tanqueray, won't you spare her?

PAULA. Won't I spare her? [*suspiciously.*] Have you mentioned your plan to Aubrey—before I came in?

MRS. C. No; I had no opportunity.

PAULA. Nor to Ellean?

MRS. C. Oh, no.

PAULA. [*looking about her in suppressed excitement.*] This hasn't been discussed at all, behind my back?

MRS. C. My dear Mrs. Tanqueray!

PAULA. Ellean, let us hear your voice in the matter!

ELLEAN. I should like to go with Mrs. Cortelyon—

PAULA. Ah!

ELLEAN. That is, if—if—

PAULA. If—what?

ELLEAN. [*looking towards AUBREY, appealingly.*] Papa!

PAULA. [*in a hard voice.*] Oh, of course—I forgot. [*to AUBREY.*] My dear Aubrey, it rests with you, naturally, whether I am—to lose—Ellean.

AUB. Lose Ellean! [*advancing to PAULA.*] There is no question of losing Ellean. You would see Ellean in town constantly when she returned from Paris; isn't that so, Mrs. Cortelyon?

MRS. C. Certainly.

PAULA. [*laughing softly.*] Oh, I didn't know I should be allowed that privilege.

MRS. C. Privilege, my dear Mrs. Tanqueray!

PAULA. Ha, ha! that makes all the difference, doesn't it?

AUB. [*with assumed gayety.*] All the difference? I should think so! [*to ELLEAN, laying his hand upon her head tenderly.*] And you are quite certain you wish to see what the world is like on the other side of Black Moor!

ELLEAN. If you are willing, papa, I am quite certain.

AUB. [*looking at PAULA irresolutely, then speaking with an effort.*] Then I—I am willing.

PAULA. [*rising and striking the table lightly with her clenched hand.*] That decides it! [*there is a general movement; excitedly to MRS. CORTELYON,*

who advances towards her.] When do you want her?

MRS. C. We go to town this afternoon at five o'clock, and sleep to-night at Bayliss's. There is barely time for her to make her preparations.

PAULA. I will undertake that she is ready.

MRS. C. I've a great deal to scramble through at home too, as you may guess. Good-bye!

PAULA. [*turning away.*] Mrs. Cortelyon is going.

[*PAULA stands looking out of the window, with her back to those in the room.*]

MRS. C. [*to DRUMMLE.*] Cayley—
DRUM. [*to her.*] Eh?

MRS. C. I've gone through it, for the sake of Aubrey and his child, but I—I feel a hundred. Is that a mad-woman?

DRUM. Of course; all jealous women are mad. [*He goes out with AUBREY.*]

MRS. C. [*hesitatingly, to PAULA.*] Good-bye, Mrs. Tanqueray.

[*PAULA inclines her head with the slightest possible movement, then resumes her former position. ELLEAN comes from the hall and takes MRS. CORTELYON out of the room. After a brief silence, PAULA turns with a fierce cry, and hurriedly takes off her coat and hat, and tosses them upon the settee.*]

PAULA. Who's that? Oh! Oh! Oh!

[*She drops into the chair as AUBREY returns; he stands looking at her.*]

AUB. I—you have altered your mind about going out.

PAULA. Yes. Please to ring the bell.

AUB. [*touching the bell.*] You are angry about Mrs. Cortelyon and Ellean. Let me try to explain my reasons—

PAULA. Be careful what you say to me just now! I have never felt like this—except once—in my life. Be careful what you say to me!

[*A SERVANT enters.*]

PAULA. [*rising.*] Is Watts at the door with the cart?

SERV. Yes, ma'am.

PAULA. Tell him to drive down to the post-office directly with this.

[*Picking up the letter which has been lying upon the table.*]

AUB. With that?

PAULA. Yes. My letter to Lady Orreyed.

[*Giving the letter to the SERVANT, who goes out.*]

AUB. Surely you don't wish me to countermand any order of yours to a servant. Call the man back—take the letter from him!

PAULA. I have not the slightest intention of doing so.

AUB. I must, then. [*going to the door; she snatches up her hat and coat and follows him.*] What are you going to do?

PAULA. If you stop that letter, I walk out of the house.

[*He hesitates, then leaves the door.*]

AUB. I am right in believing that to be the letter inviting George Orreyed and his wife to stay here, am I not?

PAULA. Oh, yes—quite right.

AUB. Let it go; I'll write to him by and by.

PAULA. [*facing him.*] You dare!

AUB. Hush, Paula!

PAULA. Insult me again and, upon my word, I'll go straight out of the house!

AUB. Insult you?

PAULA. Insult me! What else is it? My God! what else is it? What do you mean by taking Ellean from me?

AUB. Listen—!

PAULA. Listen to me! And how do you take her? You pack her off in the care of a woman who has deliberately held aloof from me, who's thrown mud at me! Yet this Cortelyon creature has only to put foot here once to be entrusted with the charge of the girl you know I dearly want to keep near me!

AUB. Paula dear! hear me—!

PAULA. Ah! of course, of course! I can't be so useful to your daughter as such people as this; and so I'm to be given the go-by for any town friend of yours who turns up and chooses to

patronize us! Hah! Very well, at any rate, as you take Ellean from me you justify my looking for companions where I can most readily find 'em.

AUB. You wish me to fully appreciate your reason for sending that letter to Lady Orreyed?

PAULA. Precisely—I do.

AUB. And could you, after all, go back to associates of that order? It's not possible!

PAULA. [*mockingly.*] What, not after the refining influence of these intensely respectable surroundings? [*going to the door.*] We'll see!

AUB. Paula!

PAULA. [*violently.*] We'll see!

[*She goes out. He stands still looking after her.*]

ACT III

The drawing-room at "Highercombe." Facing the spectator are two large French windows, sheltered by a verandah, leading into the garden; on the right is a door opening into a small hall. The fireplace, with a large mirror above it, is on the left-hand side of the room, and higher up in the same wall are double doors recessed. The room is richly furnished, and everything betokens taste and luxury. The windows are open, and there is moonlight in the garden.

[LADY ORREYED, a pretty, affected doll of a woman, with a mincing voice and flaxen hair, is sitting on the ottoman, her head resting against the drum, and her eyes closed. PAULA, looking pale, worn, and thoroughly unhappy, is sitting at a table. Both are in sumptuous dinner-gowns.]

LADY O. [*opening her eyes.*] Well, I never! I dropped off! [*feeling her hair.*] Just fancy! Where are the men?

PAULA. [*icily.*] Outside, smoking.

[A SERVANT enters with coffee, which he hands to LADY OR-

REYED. SIR GEORGE ORREYED comes in by the window. He is a man of about thirty-five, with a low forehead, a receding chin, a vacuous expression, and an ominous redness about the nose.]

LADY O. [*taking coffee.*] Here's Dodo.

SIR G. I say, the flies under the verandah make you swear. [*the SERVANT hands coffee to PAULA, who declines it, then to SIR GEORGE, who takes a cup.*] Hi! wait a bit! [*he looks at the tray searchingly, then puts back his cup.*] Never mind. [*quietly to LADY ORREYED.*] I say, they're dooced sparin' with their liqueur, ain't they?

[*The SERVANT goes out at window.*]

PAULA. [*to SIR GEORGE.*] Won't you take coffee, George?

SIR G. No, thanks. It's gettin' near time for a whiskey and potass. [*approaching PAULA, regarding LADY ORREYED admiringly.*] I say, Birdie looks rippin' to-night, don't she?

PAULA. Your wife?

SIR GEORGE. Yaas—Birdie.

PAULA. Rippin'?

SIR G. Yaas.

PAULA. Quite—quite rippin'.

[*He moves round to the settee. PAULA watches him with distaste, then rises and walks away. SIR GEORGE falls asleep on the settee.*]

LADY O. Paula love, I fancied you and Aubrey were a little more friendly at dinner. You haven't made it up, have you?

PAULA. We? Oh, no. We speak before others, that's all.

LADY O. And how long do you intend to carry on this game, dear?

PAULA. [*turning away impatiently.*] I really can't tell you.

LADY O. Sit down, old girl; don't be so fidgety. [*PAULA sits on the upper seat of the ottoman, with her back to LADY ORREYED.*] Of course, it's my duty, as an old friend, to give you a good talking-to—[*PAULA glares at her suddenly and fiercely*—but really I've found one gets so many smacks in the

face through interfering in matrimonial squabbles that I've determined to drop it.

PAULA. I think you're wise.

LADY O. However, I must say that I do wish you'd look at marriage in a more solemn light—just as I do, in fact. It is such a beautiful thing—marriage, and if people in our position don't respect it, and set a good example by living happily with their husbands, what can you expect from the middle classes? When did this sad state of affairs between you and Aubrey actually begin?

PAULA. Actually, a fortnight and three days ago; I haven't calculated the minutes.

LADY O. A day or two before Dodo and I turned up—arrived.

PAULA. Yes. One always remembers one thing by another; we left off speaking to each other the morning I wrote asking you to visit us.

LADY O. Lucky for you I was able to pop down, wasn't it, dear?

PAULA. [*glaring at her again.*] Most fortunate.

LADY O. A serious split with your husband without a pal on the premises—I should say, without a friend in the house—would be most unpleasant.

PAULA. [*turning to her abruptly.*] This place must be horribly doleful for you and George just now. At least you ought to consider him before me. Why didn't you leave me to my difficulties?

LADY O. Oh, we're quite comfortable, dear, thank you—both of us. George and me are so wrapped up in each other, it doesn't matter where we are. I don't want to crow over you, old girl, but I've got a perfect husband.

[*SIR GEORGE is now fast asleep, his head thrown back and his mouth open, looking hideous.*]

PAULA. [*glancing at SIR GEORGE.*] So you've given me to understand.

LADY O. Not that we don't have our little differences. Why, we fell out only this very morning. You remember the diamond and ruby tiara Charley Prestwick gave poor dear Connie Tirlmont years ago, don't you?

PAULA. No, I do not.

LADY O. No? Well, it's in the market. Benjamin of Piccadilly has got it in his shop window, and I've set my heart on it.

PAULA. You consider it quite necessary?

LADY O. Yes; because what I say to Dodo is this—a lady of my station must smother herself with hair ornaments. It's different with you, love—people don't look for so much blaze from you, but I've got rank to keep up; haven't I?

PAULA. Yes.

LADY O. Well, that was the cause of the little set-to between I and Dodo this morning. He broke two chairs, he was in such a rage. I forgot they're your chairs; do you mind?

PAULA. No.

LADY O. You know, poor Dodo can't lose his temper without smashing something; if it isn't a chair, it's a mirror; if it isn't that, it's china—a bit of Dresden for choice. Dear old pet! he loves a bit of Dresden when he's furious. He doesn't really throw things at me, dear; he simply lifts them up and drops them, like a gentleman. I expect our room upstairs will look rather wrecky before I get that tiara.

PAULA. Excuse the suggestion; perhaps your husband can't afford it.

LADY O. Oh, how dreadfully changed you are, Paula! Dodo can always mortgage something, or borrow of his ma. What is coming to you!

PAULA. Ah!

[*She sits at the piano and touches the keys.*]

LADY O. Oh, yes, do play! That's the one thing I envy you for.

PAULA. What shall I play?

LADY O. What was that heavenly piece you gave us last night, dear?

PAULA. A bit of Schubert. Would you like to hear it again?

LADY O. You don't know any comic songs, do you?

PAULA. I'm afraid not.

LADY O. I leave it to you.

[*PAULA plays. AUBREY and CAY-*

LEY DRUMMLE *appear outside the window; they look into the room.*

AUB. [*to DRUMMLE.*] You can see her face in that mirror. Poor girl, how ill and wretched she looks!

DRUM. When are the Orreyeds going?

AUB. [*entering the room.*] Heaven knows!

DRUM. [*following AUBREY.*] But you're entertaining them; what's it to do with heaven?

AUB. Do you know, Cayley, that even the Orreyeds serve a useful purpose? My wife actually speaks to me before our guests—think of that! I've come to rejoice at the presence of the Orreyeds!

DRUM. I dare say; we're taught that beetles are sent for a benign end.

AUB. Cayley, talk to Paula again to-night.

DRUM. Certainly, if I get the chance.

AUB. Let's contrive it. George is asleep; perhaps I can get that doll out of the way. [*as they advance into the room, PAULA abruptly ceases playing and finds interest in a volume of music; SIR GEORGE is now nodding and snoring apoplectically.*] Lady Orreyed, whenever you feel inclined for a game of billiards I'm at your service.

LADY O. [*jumping up.*] Charmed, I'm sure! I really thought you had forgotten poor little me. Oh, look at Dodo!

AUB. No, no, don't wake him; he's tired.

LADY O. I must, he looks so plain. [*rousing SIR GEORGE.*] Dodo! Dodo!

SIR GEORGE. [*stupidly.*] 'Ullo!

LADY O. Dodo dear, you were snoring.

SIR G. Oh, I say, you could 'a' told me that by and by.

AUB. You want a cigar, George; come into the billiard-room. [*giving his arm to LADY ORREYED.*] Cayley, bring Paula.

[*AUBREY and LADY ORREYED go out.*]

SIR G. [*rising.*] Hey, what! Billiard-room! [*looking at his watch.*]

How goes the—? Phew! 'Ullo, 'Ullo! Whiskey and potass!

[*He goes rapidly after AUBREY and LADY ORREYED. PAULA resumes playing.*]

PAULA. [*after a pause.*] Don't moon about after me, Cayley; follow the others.

DRUM. Thanks, by and by. [*sitting.*] That's pretty.

PAULA. [*after another pause, still playing.*] I wish you wouldn't stare so.

DRUM. Was I staring? I'm sorry. [*she plays a little longer, then stops suddenly, rises, and goes to the window, where she stands looking out; DRUMMLE moves from the ottoman to the settee.*] A lovely night.

PAULA. [*startled.*] Oh! [*without turning to him.*] Why do you hop about like a monkey?

DRUM. Hot rooms play the deuce with the nerves. Now, it would have done you good to have walked in the garden with us after dinner and made merry. Why didn't you?

PAULA. You know why.

DRUM. Ah, you're thinking of the—difference between you and Aubrey?

PAULA. Yes, I am thinking of it.

DRUM. Well, so am I. How long—?

PAULA. Getting on for three weeks.

DRUM. Bless me, it must be! And this would have been such a night to have healed it! Moonlight, the stars, the scent of flowers; and yet enough darkness to enable a kind woman to rest her hand for an instant on the arm of a good fellow who loves her. Ah, ha! It's a wonderful power, dear Mrs. Aubrey, the power of an offended woman! Only realize it! Just that one touch—the mere tips of her fingers—and, for herself and another, she changes the color of the whole world.

PAULA. [*turning to him calmly.*] Cayley, my dear man, you talk exactly like a very romantic old lady.

[*She leaves the window and sits playing with the knick-knacks on the table.*]

DRUM. [*to himself.*] H'm, that hasn't done it! Well—ha, ha!—I ac-

cept the suggestion. An old woman, eh?

PAULA. Oh, I didn't intend—

DRUM. But why not? I've every qualification—well, almost. And I confess it would have given this withered bosom a throb of grandmotherly satisfaction if I could have seen you and Aubrey at peace before I take my leave to-morrow.

PAULA. To-morrow, Cayley!

DRUM. I must.

PAULA. Oh, this house is becoming unendurable.

DRUM. You're very kind. But you've got the Orreyeds.

PAULA. [*fiercely.*] The Orreyeds! I—I hate the Orreyeds! I lie awake at night, hating them!

DRUM. Pardon me, I've understood that their visit is, in some degree, owing to—hem—your suggestion.

PAULA. Heavens! that doesn't make me like them better. Somehow or another, I—I've outgrown these people. This woman—I used to think her "jolly!"—sickens me. I can't breathe when she's near me: the whiff of her handkerchief turns me faint! And she patronizes me by the hour, until I—I feel my nails growing longer with every word she speaks!

DRUM. My dear lady, why on earth don't you say all this to Aubrey?

PAULA. Oh, I've been such an utter fool, Cayley!

DRUM. [*soothingly.*] Well, well, mention it to Aubrey!

PAULA. No, no, you don't understand. What do you think I've done?

DRUM. Done! What, *since* you invited the Orreyeds?

PAULA. Yes; I must tell you—

DRUM. Perhaps you'd better not.

PAULA. Look here! I've intercepted some letters from Mrs. Cortelyon and Ellean to—him. [*producing three unopened letters from the bodice of her dress.*] There are the accursed things! From Paris—two from the Cortelyon woman, the other from Ellean!

DRUM. But why—why?

PAULA. I don't know. Yes, I do! I saw letters coming from Ellean to her

father! not a line to me—not a line. And one morning it happened I was downstairs before he was, and I spied this one lying with his heap on the breakfast table, and I slipped it into my pocket—out of malice, Cayley, pure devilry! And a day or two afterwards I met Elwes the postman at the Lodge, and took the letters from him, and found these others amongst 'em. I felt simply fiendish when I saw them—fiendish! [*returning the letters to her bodice.*] And now I carry them about with me, and they're scorching me like a mustard plaster!

DRUM. Oh, this accounts for Aubrey not hearing from Paris lately!

PAULA. That's an ingenious conclusion to arrive at! Of course it does! [*with an hysterical laugh.*] Ha, ha!

DRUM. Well, well! [*laughing.*] Ha, ha, ha!

PAULA. [*turning upon him.*] I suppose it is amusing!

DRUM. I beg pardon.

PAULA. Heaven knows I've little enough to brag about! I'm a bad lot, but not in mean tricks of this sort. In all my life this is the most caddish thing I've done. How am I to get rid of these letters—that's what I want to know? How am I to get rid of them?

DRUM. If I were you I should take Aubrey aside and put them into his hands as soon as possible.

PAULA. What! and tell him to his face that I—! No, thank you. I suppose *you* wouldn't like to—

DRUM. No, no; I won't touch 'em!

PAULA. And you call yourself my friend?

DRUM. [*good-humoredly.*] No, I don't!

PAULA. Perhaps I'll tie them together and give them to his man in the morning.

DRUM. That won't avoid an explanation.

PAULA. [*recklessly.*] Oh, then he must miss them—

DRUM. And trace them.

PAULA. [*throwing herself upon the ottoman.*] I don't care!

DRUM. I know you don't; but let me send him to you now, may I?

PAULA. Now! What do you think a woman's made of? I couldn't stand it, Cayley. I haven't slept for nights; and last night there was thunder, too! I believe I've got the horrors.

DRUM. [*taking the little hand-mirror from the table.*] You'll sleep well enough when you deliver those letters. Come, come, Mrs. Aubrey—a good night's rest! [*holding the mirror before her face.*] It's quite time.

[*She looks at herself for a moment, then snatches the mirror from him.*]

PAULA. You brute, Cayley, to show me that!

DRUM. Then—may I? Be guided by a fr—a poor old woman! May I?

PAULA. You'll kill me, amongst you!

DRUM. What do you say?

PAULA. [*after a pause.*] Very well. [*he nods his head and goes out rapidly; she looks after him for a moment, and calls "Cayley! Cayley!"*]; then she again produces the letters, deliberately, one by one, fingering them with aversion; suddenly she starts, turning her head towards the door.] Ah!

[AUBREY enters quickly.]

AUB. Paula!

PAULA. [*handing him the letters, her face averted.*] There! [*he examines the letters, puzzled, and looks at her enquiringly.*] They are many days old. I stole them, I suppose to make you anxious and unhappy.

[*He looks at the letters again, then lays them aside on the table.*]

AUB. [*gently.*] Paula, dear, it doesn't matter.

PAULA. [*after a short pause.*] Why—why do you take it like this?

AUB. What did you expect?

PAULA. Oh, but I suppose silent reproaches are really the severest. And then, naturally, you are itching to open your letters.

[*She crosses the room as if to go.*]

AUB. Paula! [*she pauses.*] Surely, surely, it's all over now?

PAULA. All over! [*mockingly.*] Has my step-daughter returned then?

When did she arrive? I haven't heard of it!

AUB. You can be very cruel.

PAULA. That word's always on a man's lips; he uses it if his soup's cold. [*with another movement as if to go.*] Need we—

AUB. I know I've wounded you, Paula. But isn't there any way out of this?

PAULA. When does Ellean return? To-morrow? Next week?

AUB. [*wearily.*] Oh! Why should we grudge Ellean the little pleasure she is likely to find in Paris and in London?

PAULA. I grudge her nothing, if that's a hit at me. But with that woman—?

AUB. It must be that woman or another. You know that at present we are unable to give Ellean the opportunity of—of—

PAULA. Of mixing with respectable people.

AUB. The opportunity of gaining friends, experience, ordinary knowledge of the world. If you are interested in Ellean, can't you see how useful Mrs. Cortelyon's good offices are?

PAULA. May I put one question? At the end of the London season, when Mrs. Cortelyon has done with Ellean, is it quite understood that the girl comes back to us? [AUBREY is silent.] Is it? Is it?

AUB. Let us wait till the end of the season—

PAULA. Oh! I knew it. You're only fooling me; you put me off with any trash. I believe you've sent Ellean away, not for the reasons you give, but because you don't consider me a decent companion for her, because you're afraid she might get a little of her innocence rubbed off in my company? Come, isn't that the truth? Be honest! Isn't that it?

AUB. Yes.

[*There is a moment's silence, on both sides.*]

PAULA. [*with uplifted hands as if to strike him.*] Oh!

AUB. [*taking her by the wrists.*] Sit

down. Sit down. [*he puts her into a chair; she shakes herself free with a cry.*] Now listen to me. Fond as you are, Paula, of harking back to your past, there's one chapter of it you always let alone. I've never asked you to speak of it; you've never offered to speak of it. I mean the chapter that relates to the time when you were—like Ellean. [*she attempts to rise; he restrains her.*] No, no.

PAULA. I don't choose to talk about that time. I won't satisfy your curiosity.

AUB. My dear Paula, I have no curiosity—I know what you were at Ellean's age. I'll tell you. You hadn't a thought that wasn't a wholesome one, you hadn't an impulse that didn't tend towards good, you never harbored a notion you couldn't have gossiped about to a parcel of children. [*she makes another effort to rise; he lays his hand lightly on her shoulder.*] And this was a very few years back—there are days now when you look like a schoolgirl—but think of the difference between the two Paulas. You'll have to think hard, because after a cruel life, one's perceptions grow a thick skin. But, for God's sake, do think till you get these two images clearly in your mind, and then ask yourself what sort of a friend such a woman as you are to-day would have been for the girl of seven or eight years ago.

PAULA. [*rising.*] How dare you? I could be almost as good a friend to Ellean as her own mother would have been had she lived. I know what you mean. How dare you?

AUB. You say that; very likely you believe it. But you're blind, Paula; you're blind. You! Every belief that a young, pure-minded girl holds sacred—that you once held sacred—you now make a target for a jest, a sneer, a paltry cynicism. I tell you, you're not mistress any longer of your thoughts or your tongue. Why, how often, sitting between you and Ellean, have I seen her cheeks turn scarlet as you've rattled off some tale that belongs by right to the club or the smoking-room!

Have you noticed the blush? If you have, has the cause of it ever struck you? And this is the girl you say you love, I admit that you *do* love, whose love you expect in return! Oh, Paula, I make the best, the only, excuse for you when I tell you you're blind!

PAULA. Ellean — Ellean blushes easily.

AUB. You blushed as easily a few years ago.

PAULA. [*after a short pause.*] Well! have you finished your sermon?

AUB. [*with a gesture of despair.*] Oh, Paula!

[*Going up to the window, and standing with his back to the room.*]

PAULA. [*to herself.*] A few—years ago! [*she walks slowly towards the door, then suddenly drops upon the ottoman in a paroxysm of weeping.*] O God! A few years ago!

AUB. [*going to her.*] Paula!

PAULA. [*sobbing.*] Oh, don't touch me!

AUB. Paula!

PAULA. Oh, go away from me! [*he goes back a few steps, and after a little while she becomes calmer and rises unsteadily; then in an altered tone.*] Look here— [*he advances a step; she checks him with a quick gesture.*] Look here! Get rid of these people—Mabel and her husband—as soon as possible! I—I've done with them!

AUB. [*in a whisper.*] Paula!

PAULA. And then—then—when the time comes for Ellean to leave Mrs. Cortelyon, give me—give me another chance! [*he advances again, but she shrinks away.*] No, no!

[*She goes out by the door on the right. He sinks onto the settee, covering his eyes with his hands. There is a brief silence, then a SERVANT enters.*]

SERV. Mrs. Cortelyon, sir, with Miss Ellean.

[*AUBREY rises to meet Mrs. CORTELYON, who enters, followed by ELLEAN, both being in traveling dresses. The SERVANT withdraws.*]

MRS. C. [*shaking hands with AUBREY.*] Oh, my dear Aubrey!

AUB. Mrs. Cortelyon! [*kissing ELLEAN.*] Ellean dear!

ELLEAN. Papa, is all well at home?

MRS. C. We're shockingly anxious.

AUB. Yes, yes, all's well. This is quite unexpected. [*to MRS. CORTELYON.*] You've found Paris insufferably hot?

MRS. C. Insufferably hot! Paris is pleasant enough. We've had no letter from you!

AUB. I wrote to Ellean a week ago.

MRS. C. Without alluding to the subject I had written to you upon.

AUB. [*thinking.*] Ah, of course—

MRS. C. And since then we've both written, and you've been absolutely silent. Oh, it's too bad!

AUB. [*picking up the letters from the table.*] It isn't altogether my fault. Here are the letters—

ELLEAN. Papa!

MRS. C. They're unopened.

AUB. An accident delayed their reaching me till this evening. I'm afraid this has upset you very much.

MRS. C. Upset me!

ELLEAN. [*in an undertone to MRS. CORTELYON.*] Never mind. Not now, dear—not to-night.

AUB. Eh?

MRS. C. [*to ELLEAN, aloud.*] Child, run away and take your things off. She doesn't look as if she'd journeyed from Paris to-day.

AUB. I've never seen her with such a color. [*Taking ELLEAN's hands.*]

ELLEAN. [*to AUBREY, in a faint voice.*] Papa, Mrs. Cortelyon has been so very, very kind to me, but I—I have come home. [*She goes out.*]

AUB. Come home! [*to MRS. CORTELYON.*] Ellean returns to us then?

MRS. C. That's the very point I put to you in my letters, and you oblige me to travel from Paris to Willowmere on a warm day to settle it. I think perhaps it's right that Ellean should be with you just now, although I— My dear friend, circumstances are a little altered.

AUB. Alice, you're in some trouble.

MRS. C. Well—yes, I *am* in trouble.

You remember pretty little Mrs. Brereton who was once Caroline Ardale?

AUB. Quite well.

MRS. C. She's a widow now, poor thing. She has the *entresol* of the house where we've been lodging in the Avenue de Friedland. Caroline's a dear chum of mine; she formed a great liking for Ellean.

AUB. I'm very glad.

MRS. C. Yes, it's nice for her to meet her mother's friends. Er—that young Hugh Ardale the papers were full of some time ago—he's Caroline Brereton's brother, you know.

AUB. No, I didn't know. What did he do? I forget.

MRS. C. Checked one of those horrid mutinies at some far-away station in India. Marched down with a handful of his men and a few faithful natives, and held the place until he was relieved. They gave him his company and a V.C. for it.

AUB. And he's Mrs. Brereton's brother?

MRS. C. Yes. He's with his sister—*was*, rather—in Paris. He's home—invalided. Good gracious, Aubrey, why don't you help me out? Can't you guess what has occurred?

AUB. Alice!

MRS. C. Young Ardale—Ellean!

AUB. An attachment?

MRS. C. Yes, Aubrey. [*after a little pause.*] Well, I suppose I've got myself into sad disgrace. But really I didn't foresee anything of this kind. A serious, reserved child like Ellean, and a boyish, high-spirited soldier—it never struck me as being likely. [*AUBREY paces to and fro thoughtfully.*] I did all I could directly Captain Ardale spoke—wrote to you at once. Why on earth don't you receive your letters promptly, and when you do get them why can't you open them? I endured the anxiety till last night, and then made up my mind—home! Of course, it has worried me terribly. My head's bursting. Are there any salts about? [*AUBREY fetches a bottle from the cabinet and hands it to her.*] We've had one of those hateful smooth crossings

that won't let you be properly indisposed.

AUB. My dear Alice, I assure you I've no thought of blaming you.

MRS. C. That statement always precedes a quarrel.

AUB. I don't know whether this is the worst or the best luck. How will my wife regard it? Is Captain Ardale a good fellow?

MRS. C. My dear Aubrey, you'd better read up the accounts of his wonderful heroism. Face to face with death for a whole week; always with a smile and a cheering word for the poor helpless souls depending on him! Of course it's that that has stirred the depths of your child's nature. I've watched her while we've been dragging the story out of him, and if angels look different from Ellean at that moment, I don't desire to meet any, that's all!

AUB. If you were in my position—? But you can't judge.

MRS. C. Why, if I had a marriageable daughter of my own, and Captain Ardale proposed for her, naturally I should cry my eyes out all night—but I should thank Heaven in the morning.

AUB. You believe so thoroughly in him?

MRS. C. Do you think I should have only a headache at this minute if I didn't! Look here, you've got to see me down the lane; that's the least you can do, my friend. Come into my house for a moment and shake hands with Hugh.

AUB. What, is he here?

MRS. C. He came through with us, to present himself formally to-morrow. Where are my gloves? [AUBREY fetches them from the ottoman.] Make my apologies to Mrs. Tanqueray, please. She's well, I hope? [going towards the door.] I can't feel sorry she hasn't seen me in this condition.

[ELLEAN enters.]

ELLEAN. [to MRS. CORTELYON.] I've been waiting to wish you good-night. I was afraid I'd missed you.

MRS. C. Good-night, Ellean.

ELLEAN. [*in a low voice, embracing MRS. CORTELYON.*] I can't thank you. Dear Mrs. Cortelyon!

MRS. C. [*her arms round ELLEAN, in a whisper to AUBREY.*] Speak a word to her. [MRS. CORTELYON goes out.]

AUB. [to ELLEAN.] Ellean, I'm going to see Mrs. Cortelyon home. Tell Paula where I am; explain, dear.

[Going to the door.]

ELLEAN. [*her head drooping.*] Yes. [quickly.] Father! You are angry with me—disappointed?

AUB. Angry? No.

ELLEAN. Disappointed?

AUB. [*smiling and going to her and taking her hand.*] If so, it's only because you've shaken my belief in my discernment. I thought you took after your poor mother—a little, Ellean; but there's a look on your face to-night, dear, that I never saw on hers—never, never.

ELLEAN. [*leaning her head on his shoulder.*] Perhaps I ought not to have gone away.

AUB. Hush! You're quite happy?

ELLEAN. Yes.

AUB. That's right. Then, as you are quite happy, there is something I particularly want you to do for me, Ellean.

ELLEAN. What is that?

AUB. Be very gentle with Paula. Will you?

ELLEAN. You think I have been unkind.

AUB. [*kissing her upon the forehead.*] Be very gentle with Paula.

[*He goes out, and she stands looking after him; then, as she turns thoughtfully from the door, a rose is thrown through the window and falls at her feet. She picks up the flower wonderingly and goes to the window.*]

ELLEAN. [*starting back.*] Hugh!

[*HUGH ARDALE, a handsome young man of about seven-and-twenty, with a boyish face and manner, appears outside the window.*]

HUGH. Nelly! Nelly dear!

ELLEAN. What's the matter?

HUGH. Hush! Nothing. It's only

fun. [*laughing.*] Ha, ha, ha, I've found out that Mrs. Cortelyon's meadow runs up to your father's plantation; I've come through a gap in the hedge.

ELLEAN. Why, Hugh?

HUGH. I'm miserable at The Warren: it's so different from the Avenue de Friedland. Don't look like that! Upon my word I meant just to peep at your home and go back, but I saw figures moving about here, and came nearer, hoping to get a glimpse of you. Was that your father?

[*Entering the room.*]

ELLEAN. Yes.

HUGH. Isn't this fun! A rabbit ran across my foot while I was hiding behind that old yew.

ELLEAN. You must go away; it's not right for you to be here like this.

HUGH. But it's only fun, I tell you. You take everything so seriously. Do wish me good-night.

ELLEAN. We have said good-night.

HUGH. In the hall at The Warren, before Mrs. Cortelyon and a man-servant. Oh, it's so different from the Avenue de Friedland!

ELLEAN. [*giving him her hand hastily.*] Good-night, Hugh!

HUGH. Is that all? We might be the merest acquaintances.

[*He momentarily embraces her, but she releases herself.*]

ELLEAN. It's when you're like this that you make me feel utterly miserable. [*throwing the rose from her angrily.*] Oh!

HUGH. I've offended you now, I suppose?

ELLEAN. Yes.

HUGH. Forgive me, Nelly. Come into the garden for five minutes; we'll stroll down to the plantation.

ELLEAN. No, no.

HUGH. For two minutes—to tell me you forgive me.

ELLEAN. I forgive you.

HUGH. Evidently. I shan't sleep a wink to-night after this. What a fool I am! Come down to the plantation. Make it up with me.

ELLEAN. There is somebody coming

into this room. Do you wish to be seen here?

HUGH. I shall wait for you behind that yew-tree. You must speak to me, Nelly!

[*He disappears. PAULA enters.*]

PAULA. Ellean!

ELLEAN. You—you are very surprised to see me, Paula, of course.

PAULA. Why are you here? Why aren't you with—your friend?

ELLEAN. I've come home—if you'll have me. We left Paris this morning; Mrs. Cortelyon brought me back. She was here a minute or two ago; papa has just gone with her to The Warren. He asked me to tell you.

PAULA. There are some people staying with us that I'd rather you didn't meet. It was hardly worth your while to return for a few hours.

ELLEAN. A few hours?

PAULA. Well, when do you go to London?

ELLEAN. I don't think I go to London, after all.

PAULA. [*eagerly.*] You—you've quarrelled with her?

ELLEAN. No, no, no, not that; but—Paula! [*in an altered tone.*] Paula!

PAULA. [*startled.*] Eh! [*ELLEAN goes deliberately to PAULA and kisses her.*] Ellean!

ELLEAN. Kiss me.

PAULA. What—what's come to you?

ELLEAN. I want to behave differently to you in the future. Is it too late?

PAULA. Too—late! [*impulsively kissing ELLEAN and crying.*] No—no—no! No—no!

ELLEAN. Paula, don't cry.

PAULA. [*wiping her eyes.*] I'm a little shaky; I haven't been sleeping. It's all right,—talk to me.

ELLEAN. There is something I want to tell you—

PAULA. Is there—is there?

[*They sit together on the ottoman, PAULA taking ELLEAN's hand.*]

ELLEAN. Paula, in our house in the Avenue de Friedland, on the floor below us, there was a Mrs. Brereton. She used to be a friend of my mother's.

Mrs. Cortelyon and I spent a great deal of our time with her.

PAULA. [*suspiciously.*] Oh! [*letting ELLEAN'S hand fall.*] Is this lady going to take you up in place of Mrs. Cortelyon?

ELLEAN. No, no. Her brother is staying with her—*was* staying with her. Her brother—

[*Breaking off in confusion.*]

PAULA. Well?

ELLEAN. [*almost inaudibly.*] Paula—
[*She rises and walks away,*
PAULA *following her.*]

PAULA. [*taking hold of her.*] You're not in love! [ELLEAN *looks at* PAULA *appealingly.*] Oh, *you* in love! You! Oh, this is why you've come home! Of course, you can make friends with me now! You'll leave us for good soon, I suppose; so it doesn't much matter being civil to me for a little while!

ELLEAN. Oh, Paula!

PAULA. Why, how you have deceived us—all of us! We've taken you for a cold-blooded little saint. The fools you've made of us! Saint Ellean, Saint Ellean!

ELLEAN. Ah, I might have known you'd only mock me!

PAULA. [*her tone changing.*] Eh?

ELLEAN. I—I can't talk to you. [*sitting on the settee.*] You do nothing else but mock and sneer, nothing else.

PAULA. Ellean, dear! Ellean! I didn't mean it. I'm so horribly jealous, it's a sort of curse on me. [*kneeling beside ELLEAN and embracing her.*] My tongue runs away with me. I'm going to alter, I swear I am. I've made some good resolutions, and as God's above me, I'll keep them! If you are in love, if you do ever marry, that's no reason why we shouldn't be fond of each other. Come, you've kissed me of your own accord—you can't take it back. Now we're friends again, aren't we? Ellean, dear! I want to know everything, everything. Ellean, dear, Ellean!

ELLEAN. Paula, Hugh has done something that makes me very angry.

He came with us from Paris to-day, to see papa. He is staying with Mrs. Cortelyon and—I ought to tell you—

PAULA. Yes, yes. What?

ELLEAN. He has found his way by The Warren meadow through the plantation up to this house. He is waiting to bid me good-night. [*glancing towards the garden.*] He is—out there.

PAULA. Oh!

ELLEAN. What shall I do?

PAULA. Bring him in to see me! Will you?

ELLEAN. No, no.

PAULA. But I'm dying to know him. Oh, yes, you must. I shall meet him before Aubrey does. [*excitedly running her hands over her hair.*] I'm so glad. [ELLEAN *goes out by the window.*] The mirror—mirror. What a fright I must look! [*not finding the hand-glass on the table, she jumps onto the settee, and surveys herself in the mirror over the mantelpiece, then sits quietly down and waits.*] Ellean! Just fancy! Ellean!

[*After a pause ELLEAN enters by the window with HUGH.*]

ELLEAN. Paula, this is Captain Ardale—Mrs. Tanqueray.

[PAULA *rises and turns, and she and HUGH stand staring blankly at each other for a moment or two; then PAULA advances and gives him her hand.*]

PAULA. [*in a strange voice, but calmly.*] How do you do?

HUGH. How do you do?

PAULA. [*to ELLEAN.*] Mr. Ardale and I have met in London, Ellean. Er—Captain Ardale now?

HUGH. Yes.

ELLEAN. In London?

PAULA. They say the world's very small, don't they?

HUGH. Yes.

PAULA. Ellean, dear, I want to have a little talk about you to Mr. Ardale—Captain Ardale—alone. [*putting her arms round ELLEAN, and leading her to the door.*] Come back in a little while. [ELLEAN *nods to PAULA with a smile and goes out, while PAULA stands*

watching her at the open door.] In a little while—in a little— [closing the door and then taking a seat facing HUGH.] Be quick! Mr. Tanqueray has only gone down to The Warren with Mrs. Cortelyon. What is to be done?

HUGH. [*blankly.*] Done?

PAULA. Done—done. Something must be done.

HUGH. I understood that Mr. Tanqueray had married a Mrs.—Mrs.—

PAULA. Jarman?

HUGH. Yes.

PAULA. I'd been going by that name. You didn't follow my doings after we separated.

HUGH. No.

PAULA. [*sneeringly.*] No.

HUGH. I went out to India.

PAULA. What's to be done?

HUGH. Damn this chance!

PAULA. Oh, my God!

HUGH. Your husband doesn't know, does he?

PAULA. That you and I—?

HUGH. Yes.

PAULA. No. He knows about others.

HUGH. Not about me. How long were we—?

PAULA. I don't remember, exactly.

HUGH. Do you—do you think it matters?

PAULA. His—his daughter. [*with a muttered exclamation he turns away, and sits with his head in his hands.*] What's to be done?

HUGH. I wish I could think.

PAULA. Oh! Oh! What happened to that flat of ours in Ethelbert Street?

HUGH. I let it.

PAULA. All that pretty furniture?

HUGH. Sold it.

PAULA. I came across the key of the escritoire the other day in an old purse! [*suddenly realizing the horror and hopelessness of her position, and starting to her feet with an hysterical cry of rage.*] What am I maundering about?

HUGH. For God's sake, be quiet! Do let me think.

PAULA. This will send me mad! [*suddenly turning and standing over*

him.] You—you beast, to crop up in my life again like this!

HUGH. I always treated you fairly.

PAULA. [*weakly.*] Oh! I beg your pardon—I know you did—I—

[*She sinks onto the settee crying hysterically.*]

HUGH. Hush!

PAULA. She kissed me to-night! I'd won her over! I've had such a fight to make her love me! And now—just as she's beginning to love me, to bring this on her!

HUGH. Hush, hush! Don't break down!

PAULA. [*sobbing.*] You don't know! I—I haven't been getting on well in my marriage. It's been my fault. The life I used to lead spoilt me completely. But I'd made up my mind to turn over a new leaf from to-night. From to-night!

HUGH. Paula—

PAULA. Don't you call me that!

HUGH. Mrs. Tanqueray, there is no cause for you to despair in this way. It's all right, I tell you—it *shall* be all right.

PAULA. [*shivering.*] What are we to do?

HUGH. Hold our tongues.

PAULA. Eh? [*Staring vacantly.*]

HUGH. The chances are a hundred to one against any one ever turning up who knew us when we were together. Besides, no one would be such a brute as to split on us. If anybody did do such a thing we should have to lie! What are we upsetting ourselves like this for, when we've simply got to hold our tongues?

PAULA. You're as mad as I am.

HUGH. Can you think of a better plan?

PAULA. There's only one plan possible—let's come to our senses!—Mr. Tanqueray must be told.

HUGH. Your husband! What, and I lose Ellean! I lose Ellean!

PAULA. You've got to lose her.

HUGH. I won't lose her; I can't lose her!

PAULA. Didn't I read of your doing any number of brave things in India?

Why, you seem to be an awful coward!

HUGH. That's another sort of pluck altogether; I haven't this sort of pluck.

PAULA. Oh, I don't ask *you* to tell Mr. Tanqueray. That's my job.

HUGH. [*standing over her.*] You—you—you'd better! You—

PAULA [*rising.*] Don't bully me! I intend to.

HUGH. [*taking hold of her; she wrenches herself free.*] Look here, Paula, I never treated you badly—you've owned it. Why should you want to pay me out like this? You don't know how I love Ellean!

PAULA. Yes, that's just what I do know.

HUGH. I say you don't! She's as good as my own mother. I've been downright honest with her, too. I told her, in Paris, that I'd been a bit wild at one time, and, after a damned wretched day, she promised to forgive me because of what I'd done since in India. She's behaved like an angel to me! Surely I oughtn't to lose her, after all, just because I've been like other fellows! No; I haven't been half as rackety as a hundred men we could think of. Paula, don't pay me out for nothing; be fair to me, there's a good girl—be fair to me!

PAULA. Oh, I'm not considering you at all! I advise you not to stay here any longer: Mr. Tanqueray is sure to be back soon.

HUGH. [*taking up his hat.*] What's the understanding between us, then? What have we arranged to do?

PAULA. I don't know what you're going to do; I've got to tell Mr. Tanqueray.

HUGH. By God, you shall do nothing of the sort!

[*Approaching her fiercely.*]

PAULA. You shocking coward!

HUGH. If you dare! [*going up to the window.*] Mind! If you dare!

PAULA. [*following him.*] Why, what would you do?

HUGH. [*after a short pause, suddenly.*] Nothing. I'd shoot myself—that's nothing. Good-night.

PAULA. Good-night.

[*He disappears. She walks unsteadily to the ottoman, and sits; and as she does so her hand falls upon the little silver mirror, which she takes up, staring at her own reflection.*]

ACT IV

The Drawing-room at "Highercombe," the same evening.

[*PAULA is still seated on the ottoman, looking vacantly before her, with the little mirror in her hand. LADY ORREYED enters.*]

LADY O. There you are! You never came into the billiard-room. Isn't it maddening—Cayley Drummle gives me sixty out of a hundred, and beats me. I must be out of form, because I know I play remarkably well for a lady. Only last month—[*PAULA rises.*] Whatever is the matter with you, old girl?

PAULA. Why?

LADY O. [*staring.*] It's the light, I suppose. [*PAULA replaces the mirror on the table.*] By Aubrey's bolting from the billiard-table in that fashion I thought perhaps—

PAULA. Yes; it's all right.

LADY O. You've patched it up? [*PAULA nods.*] Oh, I am jolly glad—I mean—

PAULA. Yes, I know what you mean. Thanks, Mabel.

LADY O. [*kissing PAULA.*] Now take my advice; for the future—

PAULA. Mabel, if I've been disagreeable to you while you've been staying here, I—I beg your pardon.

[*Walking away and sitting down.*]

LADY O. You disagreeable, my dear? I haven't noticed it. Dodo and me both consider you make a first-class hostess; but then you've had such practice, haven't you? [*dropping on the ottoman and gaping.*] Oh, talk about being sleepy—!

PAULA. Why don't you—!

LADY O. Why, dear, I must hang about for Dodo. You may as well know it; he's in one of his moods.

PAULA. [*under her breath.*] Oh—!

LADY O. Now, it's not his fault; it was deadly dull for him while we were playing billiards. Cayley Drummle did ask him to mark, but I stopped that; it's so easy to make a gentleman look like a billiard-marker. This is just how it always is; if poor old Dodo has nothing to do, he loses count, as you may say.

PAULA. Hark!

[SIR GEORGE ORREYED *enters, walking slowly and deliberately; he looks pale and watery-eyed.*]

SIR G. [*with mournful indistinctness.*] I'm 'fraid we've lef' you a grea' deal to yourself to-night, Mrs. Tanqueray. Attractions of billiards. I apol'gise. I say, where's ol' Aubrey?

PAULA. My husband has been obliged to go out to a neighbor's house.

SIR G. I wanted his advice on a rather pressing matter connected with my family—my family. [*sitting.*] To-morrow will do just as well.

LADY O. [*to PAULA.*] This is the mood I hate so—driveling about his precious family.

SIR G. The fact is, Mrs. Tanqueray, I am not easy in my min' 'bout the way I am treatin' my poor ol' mother.

LADY O. [*to PAULA.*] Do you hear that? That's *his* mother, but *my* mother he won't so much as look at!

SIR G. I shall write to Bruton Street fir's' thing in the morning.

LADY O. [*to PAULA.*] Mamma has stuck to me through everything—well, you know!

SIR G. I'll get ol' Aubrey to figure out a letter. I'll drop line to Uncle Fitz too—dooed shame of the ol' feller to chuck me over in this manner. [*wiping his eyes.*] All my family have chucked me over.

LADY O. [*rising.*] Dodo!

SIR G. Jus' because I've married beneath me, to be chucked over! Aunt Lydia, the General, Hooky Whitgrave, Lady Sugnall—my own dear sister!—

all turn their backs on me. It's more than I can stan'!

LADY O. [*approaching him with dignity.*] Sir George, wish Mrs. Tanqueray good-night at once, and come upstairs. Do you hear me?

SIR G. [*rising angrily.*] Wha—!

LADY O. Be quiet!

SIR G. You presoom to order me about!

LADY O. You're making an exhibition of yourself!

SIR G. Look 'ere—!

LADY O. Come along, I tell you!

[*He hesitates, utters a few inarticulate sounds, then snatches up a fragile ornament from the table, and is about to dash it on the ground. LADY ORREYED retreats, and PAULA goes to him.*]

PAULA. George!

[*He replaces the ornament.*]

SIR G. [*shaking PAULA's hand.*] Good ni', Mrs. Tanqueray.

LADY O. [*to PAULA.*] Good night, darling. Wish Aubrey good-night for me. Now, Dodo? [*She goes out.*]

SIR G. [*to PAULA.*] I say, are you goin' to sit up for ol' Aubrey?

PAULA. Yes.

SIR G. Shall I keep you comp'ny?

PAULA. No, thank you, George.

SIR G. Sure?

PAULA. Yes, sure.

SIR G. [*shaking hands.*] Good-night again.

PAULA. Good-night.

[*She turns away. He goes out, steadying himself carefully. DRUMMLE appears outside the window, smoking.*]

DRUM. [*looking into the room and seeing PAULA.*] My last cigar. Where's Aubrey?

PAULA. Gone down to The Warren to see Mrs. Cortelyon home.

DRUM. [*entering the room.*] Eh? Did you say Mrs. Cortelyon?

PAULA. Yes. She has brought Ellean back.

DRUM. Bless my soul! Why?

PAULA. I—I'm too tired to tell you,

Cayley. If you stroll along the lane you'll meet Aubrey. Get the news from him.

DRUM. [*going up to the window.*] Yes, yes. [*returning to PAULA.*] I don't want to bother you, only—the anxious old woman, you know. Are you and Aubrey—?

PAULA. Good friends again?

DRUM. [*nodding.*] Um.

PAULA. [*giving him her hand.*] Quite, Cayley, quite.

DRUM. [*retaining her hand.*] That's capital. As I'm off so early to-morrow morning, let me say now—thank you for your hospitality.

[*He bends over her hand gallantly, then goes out by the window.*]

PAULA. [*to herself.*] "Are you and Aubrey—?" "Good friends again?" "Yes." "Quite, Cayley, quite."

[*There is a brief pause, then AUBREY enters hurriedly, wearing a light overcoat and carrying a cap.*]

AUB. Paula dear! Have you seen Ellean?

PAULA. I found her here when I came down.

AUB. She—she's told you?

PAULA. Yes, Aubrey.

AUB. It's extraordinary, isn't it! Not that somebody should fall in love with Ellean, or that Ellean herself should fall in love. All that's natural enough and was bound to happen, I suppose, sooner or later. But this young fellow! You know his history?

PAULA. His history?

AUB. You remember the papers were full of his name a few months ago?

PAULA. Oh, yes.

AUB. The man's as brave as a lion, there's no doubt about that; and, at the same time he's like a big good-natured school-boy, Mrs. Cortelyon says. Have you ever pictured the kind of man Ellean would marry some day?

PAULA. I can't say that I have.

AUB. A grave, sedate fellow I've thought about—hah! She has fallen in love with the way in which Ardale practically laid down his life to save

those poor people shut up in the Residency. [*taking off his coat.*] Well, I suppose if a man can do that sort of thing, one ought to be content. And yet— [*throwing his coat on the settee.*] I should have met him to-night, but he'd gone out. Paula dear, tell me how you look upon this business.

PAULA. Yes, I will—I must. To begin with, I—I've seen Mr. Ardale.

AUB. Captain Ardale?

PAULA. Captain Ardale.

AUB. Seen him?

PAULA. While you were away he came up here, through our grounds, to try to get a word with Ellean. I made her fetch him in and present him to me.

AUB. [*frowning.*] Doesn't Captain Ardale know there's a lodge and a front door to this place? Never mind! What is your impression of him?

PAULA. Aubrey, do you recollect my bringing you a letter—a letter giving you an account of myself—to the Albany late one night—the night before we got married?

AUB. A letter?

PAULA. You burnt it; don't you know.

AUB. Yes; I know.

PAULA. His name was in that letter.

AUB. [*going back from her slowly, and staring at her.*] I don't understand.

PAULA. Well—Ardale and I once kept house together. [*he remains silent, not moving.*] Why don't you strike me? Hit me in the face—I'd rather you did! Hurt me! hurt me!

AUB. [*after a pause.*] What did you—and this man—say to each other—just now?

PAULA. I—hardly—know.

AUB. Think!

PAULA. The end of it all was that I—I told him I must inform you of—what had happened . . . he didn't want me to do that . . . I declared that I would . . . he dared me to. [*breaking down.*] Let me alone!—oh!

AUB. Where was my daughter while this went on?

PAULA. I—I had sent her out of the room . . . that is all right.

AUB. Yes, yes—yes, yes.

[*He turns his head towards the door.*]

PAULA. Who's that?

[*A SERVANT enters with a letter.*]

SERV. The coachman has just run up with this from The Warren, sir. [AUBREY takes the letter.] It's for Mrs. Tanqueray, sir; there's no answer.

[*The SERVANT withdraws. AUBREY goes to PAULA and drops the letter into her lap; she opens it with uncertain hands.*]

PAULA. [*reading it to herself.*] It's from—him. He's going away—or gone—I think. [*rising in a weak way.*] What does it say? I never could make out his writing.

[*She gives the letter to AUBREY, and stands near him, looking at the letter over his shoulder as he reads.*]

AUB. [*reading.*] "I shall be in Paris by to-morrow evening. Shall wait there, at Meurice's, for a week, ready to receive any communication you or your husband may address to me. Please invent some explanation to Ellean. Mrs. Tanqueray, for God's sake, do what you can for me."

[*PAULA and AUBREY speak in low voices, both still looking at the letter.*]

PAULA. Has he left The Warren, I wonder, already?

AUB. That doesn't matter.

PAULA. No; but I can picture him going quietly off. Very likely he's walking on to Bridgeford or Cottering to-night, to get the first train in the morning. A pleasant stroll for him.

AUB. We'll reckon he's gone, that's enough.

PAULA. That isn't to be answered in any way?

AUB. Silence will answer that.

PAULA. He'll soon recover his spirits, I know.

AUB. You know. [*offering her the*

letter.] You don't want this, I suppose?

PAULA. No.

AUB. It's done with—done with.

[*He tears the letter into small pieces. She has dropped the envelope; she searches for it, finds it, and gives it to him.*]

PAULA. Here!

AUB. [*looking at the remnants of the letter.*] This is no good; I must burn it.

PAULA. Burn it in your room.

AUB. Yes.

PAULA. Put it in your pocket for now.

AUB. Yes.

[*He does so. ELLEAN enters, and they both turn, guiltily, and stare at her.*]

ELLEAN. [*after a short silence, wonderingly.*] Papa—

AUB. What do you want, Ellean?

ELLEAN. I heard from Willis that you had come in; I only want to wish you good-night. [PAULA steals away, without looking back.] What's the matter? Ah! Of course, Paula has told you about Captain Ardale?

AUB. Well?

ELLEAN. Have you and he met?

AUB. No.

ELLEAN. You are angry with him; so was I. But to-morrow when he calls and expresses his regret—to-morrow—

AUB. Ellean—Ellean!

ELLEAN. Yes, papa.

AUB. I—I can't let you see this man again. [*he walks away from her in a paroxysm of distress, then, after a moment or two, he returns to her and takes her to his arms.*] Ellean! my child!

ELLEAN. [*releasing herself.*] What has happened, papa? What is it?

AUB. [*thinking out his words deliberately.*] Something has occurred, something has come to my knowledge, in relation to Captain Ardale, which puts any further acquaintanceship between you two out of the question.

ELLEAN. Any further acquaintanceship . . . out of the question?

AUB. Yes.

[*Advancing to her quickly, but she shrinks from him.*]

ELLEAN. No, no—I am quite well. [*after a short pause.*] It's not an hour ago since Mrs. Cortelyon left you and me together here; you had nothing to urge against Captain Ardale then.

AUB. No.

ELLEAN. You don't know each other; you haven't even seen him this evening. Father!

AUB. I have told you he and I have not met.

ELLEAN. Mrs. Cortelyon couldn't have spoken against him to you just now. No, no, no; she's too good a friend to both of us. Aren't you going to give me some explanation? You can't take this position towards me—towards Captain Ardale—without affording me the fullest explanation.

AUB. Ellean, there are circumstances connected with Captain Ardale's career which you had better remain ignorant of. It must be sufficient for you that I consider these circumstances render him unfit to be your husband.

ELLEAN. Father!

AUB. You must trust me, Ellean; you must try to understand the depth of my love for you and the—the agony it gives me to hurt you. You must trust me.

ELLEAN. I will, father; but you must trust me a little too. Circumstances connected with Captain Ardale's career?

AUB. Yes.

ELLEAN. When he presents himself here to-morrow, of course you will see him and let him defend himself?

AUB. Captain Ardale will not be here to-morrow.

ELLEAN. Not! You have stopped his coming here?

AUB. Indirectly—yes./

ELLEAN. But just now he was talking to me at that window! Nothing had taken place then! And since then nothing can have—! Oh! Why—you have heard something against him from Paula.

AUB. From—Paula!

ELLEAN. She knows him.

AUB. She has told you so?

ELLEAN. When I introduced Captain Ardale to her she said she had met him in London. Of course! It is Paula who has done this!

AUB. [*in a hard voice.*] I—I hope you—you'll refrain from rushing at conclusions. There's nothing to be gained by trying to avoid the main point, which is that you must drive Captain Ardale out of your thoughts. Understand that! Your'e able to obtain comfort from your religion, aren't you? I'm glad to think that's so. I talk to you in a harsh way, Ellean, but I feel your pain almost as acutely as you do. [*going to the door.*] I—I can't say anything more to you to-night.

ELLEAN. Father! [*he pauses at the door.*] Father, I'm obliged to ask you this; there's no help for it—I've no mother to go to. Does what you have heard about Captain Ardale concern the time when he led a wild, a dissolute life in London?

AUB. [*returning to her slowly and staring at her.*] Explain yourself!

ELLEAN. He has been quite honest with me. One day—in Paris—he confessed to me—what a man's life is—what his life had been.

AUB. [*under his breath.*] Oh!

ELLEAN. He offered to go away, not to approach me again.

AUB. And you—you accepted his view of what a man's life is?

ELLEAN. As far as I could forgive him, I forgave him.

AUB. [*with a groan.*] Why, when was it you left us? It hasn't taken you long to get your robe "just a little dusty at the hem!"

ELLEAN. What do you mean?

AUB. Hah! A few weeks ago my one great desire was to keep you ignorant of evil.

ELLEAN. Father, it is impossible to be ignorant of evil. Instinct, common instinct, teaches us what is good and bad. Surely I am none the worse for knowing what is wicked and detesting it!

AUB. Detesting it! Why, you love this fellow!

ELLEAN. Ah, you don't understand! I have simply judged Captain Ardale as we all pray to be judged. I have lived in imagination through that one week in India when he deliberately offered his life back to God to save those wretched, desperate people. In his whole career I see now nothing but that one week; those few hours bring him nearer the saints, I believe, than fifty uneventful years of mere blamelessness would have done! And so, father, if Paula has reported anything to Captain Ardale's discredit—

AUB. Paula—!

ELLEAN. It must be Paula; it can't be anybody else.

AUB. You—you'll please keep Paula out of the question. Finally, Ellean, understand me—I have made up my mind. *[Again going to the door.]*

ELLEAN. But wait—listen! I have made up my mind also.

AUB. Ah! I recognize your mother in you now!

ELLEAN. You need not speak against my mother because you are angry with me!

AUB. I—I hardly know what I'm saying to you. In the morning—in the morning—

[He goes out. She remains standing, and turns her head to listen. Then, after a moment's hesitation she goes softly to the window, and looks out under the veranda.]

ELLEAN. *[in a whisper.]* Paula! Paula!

[PAULA appears outside the window and steps into the room; her face is white and drawn, her hair is a little disordered.]

PAULA. *[huskily.]* Well?

ELLEAN. Have you been under the veranda all the while—listening?

PAULA. No—no.

ELLEAN. You *have* overheard us—I see you have. And it is you who have been speaking to my father against

Captain Ardale. Isn't it? Paula, why don't you own it or deny it?

PAULA. Oh, I—I don't mind owning it; why should I?

ELLEAN. Ah! You seem to have been very, very eager to tell your tale.

PAULA. No, I wasn't eager, Ellean! I'd have given something not to have had to do it. I wasn't eager.

ELLEAN. Not! Oh, I think you might safely have spared us all for a little while.

PAULA. But, Ellean, you forget I—I am your stepmother. It was my—my duty—to tell your father what I—what I knew—

ELLEAN. What you knew? Why, after all, what can you know? You can only speak from gossip, report, hearsay! How is it possible that you—! *[she stops abruptly; the two women stand staring at each other for a moment; then ELLEAN backs away from PAULA slowly.]* Paula!

PAULA. What—what's the matter?

ELLEAN. You—you knew Captain Ardale in London!

PAULA. Why—what do you mean?

ELLEAN. Oh!

[She makes for the door, but PAULA catches her by the wrist.]

PAULA. You shall tell me what you mean!

ELLEAN. Ah! *[suddenly, looking fixedly into PAULA's face.]* You know what I mean.

PAULA. You accuse me!

ELLEAN. It's in your face!

PAULA. *[hoarsely.]* You—you think I'm—that sort of creature, do you?

ELLEAN. Let me go!

PAULA. Answer me! You've always hated me! *[shaking her.]* Out with it!

ELLEAN. You hurt me!

PAULA. You've always hated me! You shall answer me!

ELLEAN. Well, then, I have always—always—

PAULA. What?

ELLEAN. I have always known what you were!

PAULA. Ah! Who—who told you?

ELLEAN. Nobody but yourself. From the first moment I saw you I knew you

were altogether unlike the good women I'd left; directly I saw you I knew what my father had done. You've wondered why I've turned from you! There—that's the reason! Oh, but this is a horrible way for the truth to come home to every one! Oh!

PAULA. It's a lie! It's all a lie! [*forcing ELLEAN down upon her knees.*] You shall beg my pardon for it. [*ELLEAN utters a loud shriek of terror.*] Ellean, I'm a good woman! I swear I am! I've always been a good woman! You dare to say I've ever been anything else! It's a lie!

[*Throwing her off violently.*]

[AUBREY reënters.]

AUB. Paula! [*PAULA staggers back as AUBREY advances; raising ELLEAN.*] What's this? What's this?

ELLEAN. [*faintly.*] Nothing. It—it's my fault. Father, I—I don't wish to see Captain Ardale again.

[*She goes out, AUBREY slowly following her to the door.*]

PAULA. Aubrey, she—she guesses.

AUB. Guesses?

PAULA. About me—and Ardale.

AUB. About you—and Ardale?

PAULA. She says she suspected my character from the beginning... that's why she's always kept me at a distance... and now she sees through—

[*She falters; he helps her to the ottoman, where she sits.*]

AUB. [*bending over her.*] Paula, you must have said something—admitted something—

PAULA. I don't think so. It—it's in my face.

AUB. What?

PAULA. She tells me so. She's right! I'm tainted through and through; anybody can see it, anybody can find it out. You said much the same to me to-night.

AUB. If she has got this idea into her head we must drive it out, that's all. We must take steps to— What shall we do? We had better—better—What—what?

[*Sitting and staring before him.*]

PAULA. Ellean! So meek, so demure! You've often said she reminded you of her mother. Yes, I know now what your first marriage was like.

AUB. We must drive this idea out of her head. We'll do something. What shall we do?

PAULA. She's a regular woman, too. She could forgive *him* easily enough—but *me*! That's just a woman!

AUB. What can we do?

PAULA. Why, nothing! She'd have no difficulty in following up her suspicions. Suspicious! You should have seen how she looked at me! [*he buries his head in his hands; there is silence for a time, then she rises slowly, and goes and sits beside him.*] Aubrey.

AUB. Yes.

PAULA. I'm very sorry.

[*Without meeting her eyes, he lays his hand on her arm for a moment.*]

AUB. Well, we must look things straight in the face. [*glancing around.*] At any rate, we've done with this.

PAULA. I suppose so. [*after a brief pause.*] Of course, she and I can't live under the same roof any more. You know she kissed me to-night, of her own accord.

AUB. I asked her to alter towards you.

PAULA. That was it, then.

AUB. I—I'm sorry I sent her away.

PAULA. It was my fault; I made it necessary.

AUB. Perhaps now she'll propose to return to the convent—well, she must.

PAULA. Would you like to keep her with you and—and leave me?

AUB. Paula—!

PAULA. You needn't be afraid I'd go back to—what I was. I couldn't.

AUB. S—sh, for God's sake! We—you and I—we'll get out of this place... what a fool I was to come here again!

PAULA. You lived here with your first wife!

AUB. We'll get out of this place and go abroad again, and begin afresh.

PAULA. Begin afresh?

AUB. There's no reason why the

future shouldn't be happy for us—no reason that I can see—

PAULA. Aubrey!

AUB. Yes.

PAULA. You'll never forget this, you know.

AUB. This?

PAULA. To-night, and everything that's led up to it. Our coming here, Ellean, our quarrels—cat and dog!—Mrs. Cortelyon, the Orreyeds, this man! What an everlasting nightmare for you!

AUB. Oh, we can forget it, if we choose.

PAULA. That was always your cry. How can one do it!

AUB. We'll make our calculations solely for the future, talk about the future, think about the future.

PAULA. I believe the future is only the past again, entered through another gate.

AUB. That's an awful belief.

PAULA. To-night proves it. You must see now that, do what we will, go where we will, you'll be continually reminded of—what I was. I see it.

AUB. You're frightened to-night; meeting this man has frightened you. But that sort of thing isn't likely to recur. The world isn't quite so small as all that.

PAULA. Isn't it! The only great distances it contains are those we carry within ourselves—the distances that separate husbands and wives, for instance. And so it'll be with us. You'll do your best—oh, I know that—you're a good fellow. But, circumstances will be too strong for you in the end, mark my words.

AUB. Paula—!

PAULA. Of course I'm pretty now—I'm pretty still—and a pretty woman, whatever else she may be, is always—well, endurable. But even now I notice that the lines of my face are getting deeper; so are the hollows about my eyes. Yes, my face is covered with little shadows that usen't to be there. Oh, I know I'm "going off." I hate paint and dye and those messes, but by and by, I shall drift the way of the

others; I shan't be able to help myself. And then, some day—perhaps very suddenly, under a queer, fantastic light at night or in the glare of the morning—that horrid, irresistible truth that physical repulsion forces on men and women will come to you, and you'll sicken at me.

AUB. I—!

PAULA. You'll see me then, at last, with other people's eyes; you'll see me just as your daughter does now, as all wholesome folks see women like me. And I shall have no weapon to fight with—not one serviceable little bit of prettiness left me to defend myself with! A wornout creature—broken up, very likely, some time before I ought to be—my hair bright, my eyes dull, my body too thin or too stout, my cheeks raddled and ruddled—a ghost, a wreck, a caricature, a candle that gutters, call such an end what you like! Oh, Aubrey, what shall I be able to say to you then? And this is the future you talk about! I know it—I know it! *[he is still sitting staring forward; she rocks herself to and fro as if in pain.]* Oh, Aubrey! Oh! Oh!

AUB. Paula—!

[Trying to comfort her.]

PAULA. Oh, and I wanted so much to sleep to-night! *[laying her head upon his shoulder; from the distance, in the garden, there comes the sound of DRUMMLE's voice; he is singing as he approaches the house.]* That's Cayley, coming back from The Warren. *[starting up.]* He doesn't know, evidently. I—I won't see him!

[She goes out quickly. DRUMMLE's voice comes nearer. AUBREY rouses himself and snatches up a book from table, making a pretence of reading. After a moment or two, DRUMMLE appears at the window and looks in.]

DRUM. Aha! my dear chap!

AUB. Cayley?

DRUM. *[coming into the room.]* I went down to The Warren after you.

AUB. Yes?

DRUM. Missed you. Well—I've been gossiping with Mrs. Cortel-yon. Confound you, I've heard the news?

AUB. What have you heard?

DRUM. What have I heard! Why—Ellean and young Ardale! [*looking at AUBREY keenly.*] My dear Aubrey! Alice is under the impression that you are inclined to look on the affair favorably.

AUB. [*rising and advancing to DRUMMLE.*] You've not—met—Captain Ardale?

DRUM. No. Why do you ask? By the by, I don't know that I need tell you—but it's rather strange. He's not at The Warren to-night.

AUB. No?

DRUM. He left the house half an hour ago, to stroll about the lanes; just now a note came from him, a scribble in pencil, simply telling Alice that she would receive a letter from him to-morrow. What's the matter? There's nothing very wrong, is there? My dear chap, pray forgive me, if I'm asking too much.

AUB. Cayley, you—you urged me to send her away!

DRUM. Ellean! Yes, yes. But—but—by all accounts this is quite an eligible young fellow. Alice has been giving me the history—

AUB. Curse him! [*hurling his book to the floor.*] Curse him! Yes, I do curse him—him and his class! Perhaps I curse myself, too, in doing it. He has only led "a man's life"—just as I, how many of us, have done! The misery he has brought on me and mine it's likely enough we, in our time, have helped to bring on others by this leading "a man's life!" But I do curse him for all that. My God, I've nothing more to fear—I've paid my fine! And

so I can curse him in safety. Curse him! Curse him!

DRUM. In Heaven's name, tell me what's happened?

AUB. [*gripping DRUMMLE's arm.*] Paula! Paula!

DRUM. What?

AUB. They met to-night here. They—they're not strangers to each other.

DRUM. Aubrey!

AUB. Curse him! My poor, wretched wife! My poor, wretched wife!

[*The door opens and ELLEAN appears. The two men turn to her. There is a moment's silence.*]

ELLEAN. Father . . . father . . . !

AUB. Ellean?

ELLEAN. I—I want you. [*he goes to her.*] Father . . . go to Paula! [*he looks into her face, startled.*] Quickly—quickly! [*he passes her to go out; she seizes his arm, with a cry.*] No, no; don't go!

[*He shakes her off and goes.*]

ELLEAN staggers back towards DRUMMLE.]

DRUM. [*to ELLEAN.*] What do you mean? What do you mean?

ELLEAN. I—I went to her room—to tell her I was sorry for something I had said to her. And I was sorry—I was sorry. I heard the fall. I—I've seen her. It's horrible.

DRUM. She—she has—!

ELLEAN. Killed—herself? Yes—yes. So everybody will say. But I know—I helped to kill her. If I'd only been merciful!

[*She faints upon the ottoman. He pauses for a moment irresolutely—then he goes to the door, opens it, and stands looking out.*]

CYRANO DE BERGERAC *

EDMOND ROSTAND

Translated by *Henderson Daingerfield Norman*

CHARACTERS

CYRANO DE BERGERAC.
CHRISTIAN OF NEUVILLETTE.
COUNT OF GUICHE.
RAGUENEAU.
LE BRET.
CAPTAIN CARBON OF CASTEL-JALOUX.
THE CADETS.
LIGNIERE.
VALVERT.
A MARQUIS.
SECOND MARQUIS.
THIRD MARQUIS.
MONTFLEURY.
BELLEROSE.
JODELET.
CUIGY.
BRISSAILLE.
A CHURL.
A MUSKETEER.
ANOTHER MUSKETEER.
A SPANISH OFFICER.
A LIGHTHORSEMAN.
THE PORTER.
A CITIZEN.
HIS SON.
A CUT-PURSE.
A SPECTATOR.
A GUARD.
BERTRANDOU THE FIFER.
A CAPUCHIN.
TWO MUSICIANS.
THE POETS.
THE PASTRY COOKS.
ROXANE.
SISTER MARTHA.
LISE.
THE VENDER OF LIGHT WINES.
MOTHER MARGARET OF JESUS.
THE DUENNA.
SISTER CLAIRE.
AN ACTRESS.
SECOND ACTRESS.

THE PAGES.

THE WAITRESS.

The Crowd, Plain Citizens, Marquises, Musketeers, Pickpockets, Pastry Cooks, Poets, Cadets of Gascony, The Cardinal, the Academicians, Comedians, Violins, Pages, Children, Spanish Soldiers, Spectators, Euphuists, Nuns, etc.

First four acts in 1640, the fifth in 1655.

[DEDICATION]

It is to the soul of Cyrano that I wished to dedicate this poem. But since it has entered into you, Coquelin, it is to you that I dedicate it.

E. R.

ACT I

A PLAY AT THE HOTEL OF BURGUNDY

The hall of the Hotel of Burgundy in 1640. A sort of tennis court arranged and decorated for theatrical productions.

The hall is an oblong; it is seen obliquely, in such a way that one side of it makes the background, which begins at the front wing on the right and runs to the rear wing on the left, making an angle with the stage which is seen cantwise.

The stage is encumbered on both sides with benches placed along the wings. The curtain is made of two lengths of tapestry that can be drawn apart. Above a harlequin's mask, the royal arms. Broad steps lead from the stage to the hall floor. On either side of these steps is a place for the musi-

* This translation of *Cyrano de Bergerac* is reprinted here by permission of The Macmillan Company.

cians. A row of candles. There are two ranks of side galleries; the upper tier is divided into boxes.

There are no seats in the pit, which is the real stage of this play; but at the back of the pit on the right some benches are ranged and under a stairway which leads to the better seats,—a stairway of which only the lower steps can be seen, there is a sort of refreshment booth, decorated with little tapers, vases of flowers, glasses of crystal, plates of cakes, flacons, etc.

At the back, under the gallery, is the entrance. A great door is partly opened to admit the spectators. On a panel of this door, as well as in various corners and above the refreshment stand, are red placards, on which one may read *CLORISE*. As the curtain rises, the hall is in semi-darkness, and quite empty. The lustres are lowered to the middle of the pit, ready to be lighted.

SCENE I.

[*The Public, arriving a few at a time. Cavaliers, Lackeys, Pages, Cut-Purses, the PORTER, etc. Later the Marquises, CUIGY, BRISSAILLE, the Serving Maid, the Musicians, etc. One hears, behind the door, a tumult of voices; then a trooper enters, abruptly.*]

PORTER. [*pursuing him.*] Hola. Your fifteen pence.

TROOPER. I enter gratis.

PORTER. Why?

TROOPER. I'm of the King's Horse, of the Household, I.

PORTER. [*to another who comes in.*] You?

2ND TROOPER. I don't pay.

PORTER. But . . .

2ND TROOPER. I'm a musketeer.

1ST TROOPER. [*to second.*] They don't begin till two. The pit is clear.

Let's have a bout at fencing.

A LACKEY. [*coming in.*] Flanquin . . . hey!

ANOTHER. [*already arrived.*] Wine?

FIRST. [*disclosing a pack of cards, hidden in his doublet.*] Cards, dice.

[*He seats himself on the floor.*] Yes, my bully boy.

2ND LACKEY. [*same play.*] Let's play.

1ST LACKEY. [*feels in his pocket for a candle end, which he lights and sets on the floor.*] I like a light, and so I filched this bit.

A GUARD. [*to a flower girl who comes in.*] How sweet, to come before the lamps are lit!

ONE OF THE FENCERS. Touch!

ONE OF THE GAMBLERS. Clubs!

THE GUARD. [*pursuing the girl.*] A kiss!

THE FLOWER GIRL. [*freeing herself.*] They'll see!

THE GUARD. Oh, never fear.

A MAN. [*seating himself on the ground, with others who have brought provisions.*] When one comes early, one has comfort here.

A CITIZEN. [*directing his son.*] Let us sit here.

A PLAYER. Aces!

A MAN. [*who takes a bottle from under his coat, as he sits down.*] I droughtily

Drink burgundy at the Hotel of Burgundy. [*He drinks.*]

CITIZEN. [*to his son.*] A man might take this for a wicked place.

[*He points to the drunkard with the tip of his walking stick.*] Sots!

[*One of the fencers jostles him as he lunges.*]

Brawlers!

[*He sprawls into the group of card-players.*] Gamblers!

THE GUARD. [*behind him, still coaxing the flower girl.*] Kiss me!

CITIZEN. [*hastily dragging his son away.*] God of grace!

And in a hall like this, where brigands gather,

They played Rotrou, my son.

THE YOUNG MAN. And Corneille, Father.

A GROUP OF PAGES. [*holding hands enter singing a roundelay.*]

Tra la la la la la la la lere.

PORTER. [*severely.*] No nonsense, pages.

1ST PAGE. [*with wounded dignity.*] Sir, we have some pride.

[*Whispers, as the porter turns his back.*] Have you a string?

2ND PAGE. Yes, and a hook, beside.

1ST PAGE. [*giggling.*] Let's fish for wigs. I know a likely station.

A CUT-PURSE. [*grouping around him several evil looking fellows.*]

Come, pay attention to your education:

Your first attempt to steal from folk like these.

2ND PAGE. [*calling cautiously to other pages already in the upper gallery.*] Have you a blow gun?

3RD PAGE. [*from the gallery.*] Aye, and lots of peas.

[*He shoots the pea-shooter in proof.*]

YOUNG MAN. [*to his father.*] What will they play?

CITIZEN. *Clorise.*

YOUNG MAN. Who is it by?

CITIZEN. Balthazar Baro. That's a piece, say I . . . [*They go up.*]

THE CUT-PURSE. [*to his acolytes.*]

Cut all knee ruffles close. Don't spoil the lace.

A SPECTATOR. [*to his companion, pointing to a high corner seat.*] I saw *The Cid* first played from just that place.

THE CUT-PURSE. [*making swift play with his fingers.*] Watches . . .

OLD CITIZEN. [*coming back with his son.*] You'll see great actors.

THE CUT-PURSE. [*with little, furtive movements of his hands.*]

He who handles

Handkerchiefs deft . . .

OLD CITIZEN. *Montfleury, . . .*

SOMEBODY. [*calling from the gallery.*] Light the candles!

OLD CITIZEN. *Bellerose, l'Epy, Jodelet, men of that ilk.*

A PAGE. [*from the pit.*] Here is the waitress.

WAITRESS. [*appearing behind the refreshment booth.*]

Oranges! New milk!

Shrub! Cedar bitters!

[*A noise at the door.*]

A FALSETTO VOICE. Rascals, knaves, give place.

A LACKEY. [*astonished.*] Marquises . . . in the pit?

ANOTHER LACKEY. A moment's space.

[*Enter a party of fashionable lordlings.*]

A MARQUIS. [*seeing the place half empty.*]

What's this? Arriving with the linen drapers?

Step on no toes? It gives a man the vapors;

Lud me! [*He confronts other new arrivals.*]

Cuigy; Brissaille!

[*Effusive greetings.*]

CUIGY. True friends,—to face this scandal,—

Arrived with us before they light a candle.

THE MARQUIS. I am in a plaguey humor. Shadows! Gloods!

ANOTHER. Console yourself. The candle lighter comes.

THE HALL. [*greeting the candle lighter.*] Ah! . . .

[*They crowd around the lustres as he lights them. Some people have taken seats in the galleries. LIGNIÈRE enters the pit, arm in arm, with CHRISTIAN OF NEUVILLE. LIGNIÈRE, his dress a little disordered, looks distinguished, but dissipated and self-indulgent. CHRISTIAN, dressed elegantly, but a little unfashionably, seems preoccupied; his attention is fixed on the boxes, which he scans carefully.*]

SCENE II.

[*The Same; CHRISTIAN, LIGNIÈRE; later, RAGUENEAU and LE BRET.*]

CUIGY. Lignière!

BRIS. [*laughing.*] Not fuddled yet?

LIGN. [*aside to CHRISTIAN.*] I may, you said? . . .

[CHRISTIAN *nods assent.*] Baron of Neuville.

[*Bows acknowledgments.*]

THE HALL. [*acclaiming the drawing up of the first lighted chandelier.*] Ah! . . .

CUIGY. [*to BRISSAILLE, looking at CHRISTIAN.*] A charming head.

1ST MARQUIS. [*who has heard.*] Peuh!

LIGN. [*presenting to CHRISTIAN.*] My lords of Cuigy, of Brissaille.

CHRIS. [*bowing.*] Enchanted!

1ST MARQUIS. [*to SECOND.*] Handsome enough,—but fashion somewhat scantied.

Not the last word.

LIGN. [*to CUIGY.*] Touraine, his native place.

CHRIS. I have hardly been in Paris twenty days.

I join the guards to-morrow as . . .

1ST MARQUIS. [*giving his attention to the people who are coming into the boxes.*] See there,

The wife of the Justice . . .

THE WAITRESS. Oranges! Milk!

THE VIOLINS. [*tuning.*] La lere.

CUIGY. [*to CHRISTIAN, indicating the rapidly filling room.*] A rout.

CHRIS. A goodly crowd.

1ST MARQUIS. The world entire.

[*They name the ladies as they enter their boxes, dressed in the height of the fashion. There are greetings, smiles and bows.*]

2ND MARQUIS. Guéménée . . .

CUIGY. Bois-Dauphin . . .

1ST MARQUIS. Whom all admire.

BRIS. Chavigny . . .

2ND MARQUIS. Toys with all hearts,—the elf.

LIGN. Hola,—from Rouen, here's Corneille himself.

THE YOUNG MAN. [*to his father.*] The Academy is here?

CITIZEN. More than one member; Boudu, Boissat, and Cureau of the Chamber,

Porchères, Colomby, Bourdon and Arbaud,—

All those immortals almost in a row.

1ST MARQUIS. Attention! Look! Our Euphuists take their place,—

Barthenoide, Felixerie, Cassandace.
2ND MARQUIS. Ah, how melodiously the surnames fall!

You know them all, Marquis?

1ST MARQUIS. Marquis, I know them all!

LIGN. [*to CHRISTIAN aside.*] My boy, I came to render you a favor

The lady lacks. So I will seek the savor

Of my old vice.

CHRIS. [*appealing.*] Not yet! Ah, stay, to prove,—

You know the town,—for whom I die of love.

1ST VIOLIN. [*rapping on his rack with his bow.*] Violins, all.

[*He lifts his bow.*]

WAITRESS. Citrons! Macaroons!

CHRIS. Stay yet!

She may be a fine lady; a coquette,—

I dare not speak. I am not quick,—not bright;

I get confused when smart folk talk or write.

I'm just a timid soldier,—that is all.

She sits there always,—yonder empty stall.

LIGN. [*trying to break away.*] I'm going.

CHRIS. [*restraining him.*] O, prithee, stay.

LIGN. [*laughing but determined.*] O, you be cursed.

Assoucy waits me. Here, one dies of thirst.

WAITRESS. [*passing with her tray.*] Orangeade!

LIGN. Fie!

WAITRESS. Milk!

LIGN. Pou-ee!

WAITRESS. Rivesalte!

LIGN. Halt!

[*To CHRISTIAN.*] I'll stay a little.

See you this rivesalte?

[*He sits down near the serving stand. The waitress pours the rivesalte for him.*]

CRIS. [*as the audience recognizes a beaming, fat little man who enters.*] Ah, Ragueneau!

LIGN. [*to CHRISTIAN.*] The famous bake-shop master, Ragueneau!

RAGUE. [*dressed like a pastry cook in*

his Sunday-best, coming hurriedly up to LIGNIÈRE.]

Sir, have you seen our master Cyrano?

LIGN. [*presenting RAGUENEAU to CHRISTIAN.*]

The pastry cook of playwright and of poet.

RAGUE. You flatter, sir.

LIGN. Maecenas!—all men know it!

RAGUE. These gentlemen do let me serve their need.

LIGN. On credit. He is poet, too.

RAGUE. Indeed,

They tell . . .

LIGN. Daft over rhymes.

RAGUE. True, for a roundelay . . .

LIGN. You'd give a tart.

RAGUE. Oh, a plain tartlet, say!

LIGN. Good soul, he makes excuses.

On my soul,

For a triolet he gives. . . .

RAGUE. [*apologetically.*] A roll . . .

LIGN. [*severely.*] Milk roll.

You love the theatre?

RAGUE. I idolize it.

LIGN. You pay your way,—Ah, I shall advertise it,—

With pastry always. Tell us . . .
what was mustered

For today's entrance?

RAGUE. Fifteen puffs, with custard.

My lord Cyrano lacks. I am surprised.

LIGN. But why?

RAGUE. Montfleury plays.

LIGN. I am advised
That tun plays Phedon for us. Even
so,

What's that to Cyrano?

RAGUE. You did not know?

He hates Montfleury, sir, and doth engage

To keep him four weeks from any stage.

LIGN. [*who is drinking his fourth little glass of rivesalte.*] Ah, well? . . .

RAGUE. Montfleury plays.

CUIGY. [*coming up with his party.*] He can't help that.

RAGUE. Oh, oh,

I've come to see.

CHRIS. Who is this Cyrano?

CUIGY. When 't comes to fencing, he knows all the cards.

2ND MARQUIS. Noble?

CUIGY. Enough . . . commission in the Guards.

[*He indicates a gentleman who enters the hall, apparently looking for someone.*] His friend, Le Bret, can tell you.

[*He calls.*] Le Bret!

[*Le Bret comes toward them.*] One sees

You seek,—is it for Bergerac?

LE BRET. Yes; I am not at ease.

CUIGY. Am I right,—he's not like everyone?

LE BRET. [*tenderly.*] The rarest, finest spirit 'neath the sun.

RAGUE. Rhymers . . .

CUIGY. And duellists . . .

BRIS. Physicists . . .

LE BRET. Musicians.

LIGN. What visage heteroclitical is his'n?

RAGUE. Certes, I think grave Philip of Champagne

Could never limn for us his portrait plain.

Extravagant, eccentric, sensitive, droll,

The great Jacque Callot, calling all the roll

Of his mad fighters, could not rival him.

Broad hat with triple plume; doublet a-trim,

Six-pointed; cape uplifted by his sword,—

Cocked like a rooster's tail upon my word,—

Prouder, i' faith, than any Artaban Of Gascony since Gascony began.

His Punch's ruff surmounting, wondrous, shows

A nose. O, sirs, what nose is that there nose!

One can't see such a nose in any station,

Not crying, "No, that's pure exaggeration."

One thinks, "He'll doff it. 'Tis a thing to doff."—

My lord of Bergerac don't take it off.

LE BRET. [*shaking his head.*] He

wears,—and who remarks it, dares his hate.

RAGUE. [*proudly.*] His rapier looks like half the shears of Fate.

1ST MARQUIS. [*shrugging his shoulders.*] He will not come.

RAGUE. Yes, . . . I will bet a hen Roasted by Ragueneau.

THE MARQUIS. [*laughing.*] Done.

[*A murmur of admiration runs through the Hall. ROXANE enters her box. She sits down at the front, her chaperone takes the seat in the back of the box. CHRISTIAN, occupied with paying the waitress, doesn't see her.*]

2ND MARQUIS. [*with little affected cries.*] Gentlemen!

She's dreadfully delicious.

1ST MARQUIS. Like a peach That smiles upon a cherry.

2ND MARQUIS. She can reach,— She is so fresh,—all hearts,—give each a cold.

CHRIS. [*raising his head, sees ROXANE and grips LIGNIÈRE'S arm excitedly.*] 'Tis she.

LIGN. [*sipping his rivesalte.*] She, is it?

CHRIS. Yes. Speak quick. I am overbold . . .

LIGN. Magdeleine Robin, whom they style Roxane, Euphuist, . . .

CHRIS. Alas!

LIGN. Orphan, unmarried,—cousin to the man

Of whom we spoke, Cyrano.

[*At this moment a very elegant nobleman, wearing the order of the Holy Ghost on his breast, enters the box, and, standing, chats a moment with ROXANE.*]

CHRIS. [*trembling.*] Who is that?

LIGN. [*who is getting decidedly drunk, winking.*] Tee-hee!

The Count of Guiche, but married, do you see,

To the niece of Richelieu. His heart's desire

Is to wed Roxane to a gloomy squire,—

My Lord of Valvert,—vicomte,— feeble stuff.

It irks her, yet this Guiche has power enough

To persecute a simple citizen.

I watched his sly manœuvering,—and then,

I put it in a ballad,—Oh, my eye,

It's naughty!—Lemme shing it.

[*He rises, staggering, glass lifted, ready to sing.*]

CHRIS. No. Good-bye.

LIGN. Going?

CHRIS. To seek this Valvert.

LIGN. Have a care.

He'll kill you. . . . Stay. Somebody's looking. There.

[*He just indicates ROXANE.*]

CHRIS. It is true.

[*He stands, gazing. The group of cut-purses, seeing him stand, head lifted, lips parted, draw closer.*]

LIGN. 'Tis I who go. I'm thirsty. Frien's 'll get

Tired, waitin' round in taverns. . . .

[*He goes out, staggering.*]

LE BRET. [*who has made the rounds of the hall, returning to RAGUE-JEAU, and speaking cheerfully.*] No Cyrano.

RAGUE. [*incredulous.*] And yet . . .

LE BRET. I almost hope he hasn't seen the board.

THE HALL. Begin! Begin!

SCENE III.

[*The Same, without LIGNIÈRE; The COUNT OF GUICHE; VALVERT; later, MONTFLEURY.*]

A MARQUIS. [*seeing the COUNT OF GUICHE, who leaves ROXANE'S box and crosses the pit, surrounded by obsequious noblemen, among whom is the VISCOUNT OF VALVERT.*] He has his court, my word!

ANOTHER. Ff . . . Still a Gascon.

1ST MARQUIS. But adroit, and cold,— That kind succeeds. Come, let us join the fold.

[*They go toward the COUNT OF GUICHE.*]

2ND MARQUIS. My Lord, your ribbons make a goodly show,—

Is the shade "kiss-me-love," or "flank-of-doe"?

GUICHE. The shade is called "dying-Spaniard."

1ST MARQUIS. Good. The shade Lies not,—because, sir, with your doughty aid

We drive the foe in Flanders.

GUICHE. I am ready To mount the stage. Coming?

[*He goes toward the stage, followed by the marquises and other noblemen. He turns and calls.*] Valvert!

CHRIS. [*who has heard and watched the party, trembles at hearing that name.*] Valvert, said he?

Oh, in his face I'll hurl . . .

[*He puts his hand in his pocket and meets the hand of a cut-purse, in the act of robbing him.*]

What's this? I planned

To pluck my glove out . . .

THE CUT-PURSE. [*ruefully.*] And you plucked a hand.

[*In a different tone and speaking quick and low.*]

Loose me,—I'll tell a secret.

CHRIS. [*still holding him.*] What?

THE CUT-PURSE. Lignière, Who left you . . .

CHRIS. Eh?

THE CUT-PURSE. Best patter his last prayer.

He made a song, touching great folk. He blundered.

A hundred men,—I'm one—will lie in wait . . .

CHRIS. A hundred?

Who plots this thing?

THE CUT-PURSE. Sir, one must use discretion.

CHRIS. [*shrugging his shoulders.*] Oh! . . .

THE CUT-PURSE. [*with dignity.*] One has the ethics, sir, of one's profession.

CHRIS. Where do they lurk?

THE CUT-PURSE. Nesle Gate; dark as a cavern.

Best warn him, sir.

CHRIS. [*loosing his hold of the fellow's wrist.*] Where find him?

THE CUT-PURSE. Why, at any tavern. Gold Wine-Press, Fir-Cone, Bursting-Belt, Two-Links.

Leave warning in them all. In all, he drinks.

A written word would be the safest plan.

CHRIS. I go. The knaves! A hundred, 'gainst one man!

[*He looks longingly at ROXANE.*] To leave her, . . . her!

[*Furiously, looking at VALVERT.*] And him. But I must save Lignière.

[*He goes out, running. The COUNT OF GUICHE, the viscount, the marquises and all the fashionable gentlemen have disappeared behind the curtain of the stage, to take their places on the benches ranged along the wings. The pit is completely filled. Not an empty place in stalls or galleries.*]

THE HALL. Begin!

A CITIZEN. [*whose wig is suddenly lifted on a hook from a line thrown by one of the pages in the gallery.*] My wig!

CRIES OF MIRTH. A rather sudden shave.

Bravo! Ha-ha-ha!

THE CITIZEN. [*raging and shaking his fist.*] Theft! Rapine!

Violence!

[*Laughter and shouting, which begins noisily and then dies away.*] Ha-ha, ha-ha, ha-ha! [*Silence.*]

LE BRET. [*mystified.*] This sudden silence?

[*A spectator whispers something in his ear.*] Ah?

THE SPECTATOR. [*importantly.*] I have it on the best authority.

[*Whispers run through the hall.*]

No. Yes. Box with the grill. Yes—no—'tis he.

The Cardinal! Cardinal? The Cardinal!

A PAGE. The devil,—now we'll have no fun at all!

[*A rap upon the stage.
Everybody is quiet.*]

VOICE OF A MARQUIS. [*in the stillness,
behind the curtain.*] Snuff that
candle.

ANOTHER. [*poking his head between
the curtain folds.*] Fetch a chair.

[*A chair is handed from hand
to hand above the heads of
the audience. The marquis
takes it and his head disap-
pears not before he has
thrown a few kisses toward
the boxes.*]

A SPECTATOR. [*testily.*] Silence. Si-
lence!

[*The three strokes are heard.
The curtains are drawn apart.
The marquises are sitting
along the sides of the stage in
studied poses. The setting
shows a pastoral scene in soft
tones of blue. Four little
crystal lustres light the scene.
The violins play softly.*]

LE BRET. [*whispering to RAGUENEAU.*]
Montfleury enters?

RAGUE. [*low.*] Yes; he will com-
mence.

LE BRET. Cyrano is not here.

RAGUE. I lose, you see!

LE BRET. So much the better!

[*Sound of shepherds' pipes.
MONTFLEURY appears, enor-
mous, in a shepherd's costume,
a chaplet of roses tipped
over one ear, and blowing be-
ribboned pipes.*]

THE PIT. [*applauding.*] Montfleury!
Montfleury!

MONT. "How happy he who lives out
all his days

Far from the court,—akin to
Nature's ways,

Who hears the voice of Zephyr when
she speaks."

A VOICE. [*from the middle of the pit.*]
Knave, you were interdicted for four
weeks.

[*Stupefaction. Everybody
turns. Murmurs.*]

DIVERS VOICES. Hey? What? What's
that?

CUIGY. 'Tis he.

LE BRET. [*terrified.*] Cyrano!

THE VOICE. King of clowns, I tell
You, leave the stage.

ALL THE HALL. [*indignant.*] Oh!

MONT. But . . . but . . .

THE VOICE. You rebel?

DIVERS VOICES. [*from pit and stalls.*]

Tut tut! Montfleury, play! You
have no need

To be afraid!

MONT. [*in a voice that lacks convic-
tion.*] "How happy he who lives
out all . . ."

THE VOICE. [*more menacing.*] Indeed?
Do you desire, in face of these be-
holders,

To feel my stick about your padded
shoulders?

[*A cane upheld by a long arm
waves above the heads in the pit.*]

MONT. [*in a voice that grows ever
feebler.*] "How hap . . ."

THE VOICE. Begone!

THE PIT. Oh!

MONT. [*choking.*] "Lives out, un-
afraid . . ."

CYRANO. [*rising from the pit, stands on
his chair, erect, arms folded,
plumed hat in battle array,
moustache bristling, nose ter-
rible.*] I shall be angry soon.

[*Sensation when the hall sees him.*]

SCENE IV.

[*The Same; CYRANO; later, BELLE-
ROSE, JODELET.*]

MONT. [*to the MARQUISES.*] Sirs, to my
aid!

Good sir! . . .

A MARQUIS. [*coolly.*] Go on and play.

CYRANO. Begone! You pause?

Fat friend, I may be forced to box
your jaws.

MARQUISES. Enough!

CYRANO. If any Marquis speak again,
His ribbon shall be fluttered by my
cane.

ALL THE MARQUISES. [*rising.*] This is
too much! Montfleury!

CYRANO. Montfleury goes,—

Lest I cut off his ears and slash his nose.
 A VOICE. But . . .
 CYRANO. He goes . . .
 ANOTHER VOICE. Really . . .
 CYRANO. He dares to stop?
 [With a gesture as if rolling up his sleeves.]
 I'll set the stage, then, as a cleaver's shop.
 I'll carve this sausage, stuffed in Italy.
 MONT. You insult Thalia, in insulting me.
 CYRANO. *[very politely.]* If the Muse knew you, sir,—who knows you not,—
 I think you'd wish yourself once more forgot.
 Seeing you shaped so like an up-turned bowl,
 She would chastise you with her buskin's sole.
 THE PIT. Montfleury! O, Montfleury! Baro's play!
 CYRANO. *[to those about him.]* Have pity on my scabbard, friends, I pray.
 He's clinging to his mistress, but I fear . . . *[The circle widens.]*
 THE CROWD. *[recoiling.]* He! La!
 CYRANO. *[to MONTFLEURY.]* Begone!
 THE CROWD. *[surging closer, angrily.]* Oh! Oh!
 CYRANO. *[turning quickly.]* Who is that I hear? *[A fresh retreat.]*
 A VOICE. *[in the back of the hall, singing.]*
 Cyrano of Bergerac
 Bully and tease;
 Though his permission lack,
 We'll have *Clorise*!
 ALL THE HALL. *[singing.]* We'll have *Clorise*!
 CYRANO. Unless that song immediately is dumb,
 I'll slay you all.
 A CITIZEN. Aha, has Samson come?
 CYRANO. To make the test, lend me your jaw-bone, friend.
 A LADY. *[from her stall.]* Unheard of . . .
 A GENTLEMAN. Scandalous . . .

A CITIZEN. This thing must end.
 A PAGE. A lovely time! . . .
 THE PIT. K . . . s . . . s! Montfleury! Cyrano!
 CYRANO. Silence!
 THE PIT. *[deliriously.]* Hew-haw! buzz-z-z! S-s-st! Cocorico!
 CYRANO. I bid . . .
 A PAGE. Miauw!
 CYRANO. I bid you told your tongue.
 I challenge all the pit, both old and young.
 I'll write the names and take the numbers here.
 Heroes, approach. You see . . . the way is clear.
 You, sir? No? You? To the first duellist,
 The honour due to him who heads a list.
 All who seek death have but to speak the word.
[Silence.] Too modest, eh—to see a naked sword?
 Well, to my task. A swelling, inflammation,
 Infects the stage. . . . Perhaps . . .
[He fingers his sword.] . . . an operation. . . .
 MONT. I . . .
 CYRANO. *[coming down off his chair, seats himself as if he were at his own fireside, in the middle of the circle that has formed around him.]* I shall clap thrice, Full Moon. When I have done,
 Eclipse yourself.
 THE PIT. *[amused.]* Ah, ho, ho, ho, ho!
 CYRANO. *[clapping his hands.]* One.
 MONT. I . . .
 A VOICE. *[from the stalls.]* Stay!
 THE PIT. He'll stay; . . . He won't! . . .
 MONT. Woe's me!
 I think, sirs, . . .
 CYRANO. Two.
 MONT. 'Twere really wiser . . .
 CYRANO. Three!
 [MONTFLEURY disappears as if the floor had opened and swallowed him. A storm of laughter, howls and hisses.]
 Ho, ho! Coward! Come back!
 CYRANO. *[turns and crosses his arms.]*
 If he should dare return . . .

A CITIZEN. Our orator!

[BELLEROSE comes forward and bows.]

THE BOXES. Bellerose!

BELLE. [*with elegance.*] Sirs, you shall learn . . .

THE PIT. No! Jodelet! Go back!

JODELET. [*comes forward; he speaks with a nasal drawl.*] You flock of sheep . . .

THE PIT. Ah, ha! Bravo! Bravo!

JODELET. Aye, now you cheep!

Our paunchy actor, whom you love,
—Alack,

Is driven . . .

THE PIT. Coward!

JODELET. Forced . . .

THE PIT. Let him come back!

VOICES. Come back!

SOME. No!

OTHERS. Yes!

A YOUNG MAN. [*to CYRANO.*] It's all so puzzling;

Why do you hate Montfleury?

CYRANO. Why, young gosling?
I have two reasons. Either would suffice.

Primo, an actor having every vice
Of manner, breathing, voice. He
mouths his words;

Heaves up on winches what should
fly like birds.

Secundo,—that's my secret!

THE OLD CITIZEN. [*with the son.*]

Have you not any

Shame,—to deprive us of *Clorise*?

CYRANO. [*turning, respectfully.*] Old jennet,

Old Baro's verses are not worth a—
zero.

Ruthless, I interrupt.

THE EUPHUISTS. [*from the stall.*] Ah,
shame! Our Baro!

My dear . . . Could any one . . .

CYRANO. [*turning his chair toward the boxes, gallantly.*] Ye radiant
ones,

Cup-bearers of our dreams,—flowers,
stars, and suns,

Beneath whose smiles, death's pangs
were all forgot,

Inspire our verses still,—but judge
them not!

BELLE. What of the money?

CYRANO. [*turning his chair toward the stage.*] Bellerose, I say,
That's the first word of sense I've
heard to-day.

Tear not the Thespian robe to which
we clung!

[*He stands up and tosses a bag to the stage.*]

So catch this as it flies, and hold
your tongue.

THE HALL. [*dazzled.*] Oh! Ah!

JODELET. [*catching it and feeling its weight.*] At this rate, sir, be
quite at ease.

Come every evening to forbid
Clorise.

THE HALL. Ho! Ha!

JODELET. Though none of us should be
allowed to start.

BELLE. Well, well, let's clear the
hall.

JODELET. Let all depart.

[*The audience drifts away, CYRANO watching contentedly. But the dispersing crowd is checked by the episode which follows, and their departure is arrested. The ladies in the stalls, already standing and putting on their wraps, stop to listen and finally take their seats again.*]

LE BRET. [*to CYRANO.*] What folly!

A CHURL. [*approaching CYRANO.*] Our
comedian! What a scandal!

He is protected by the Duke of
Candal.

Have you a patron?

CYRANO. No.

CHURL. You haven't?

CYRANO. No.

CHURL. What, no great nobleman to
shield you? So?

CYRANO. [*exasperated.*] No, I've twice
told you. You'd have thrice, no
less?

Nay,—no protector.

[*He puts his hand on his sword.*]

But a protectress.

THE CHURL. But you will quit the
town?

CYRANO. That's as I will.

THE CHURL. The great Duke's arm is
long.

CYRANO. But longer still
Is mine when [*he touches his sword*]
I have made it so extreme.

THE CHURL. You would not dream of
daring . . .

CYRANO. I would dream.

THE CHURL. But . . .

CYRANO. Turn on your heel and march.

THE CHURL. But . . .

CYRANO. Turn your toes.
—Or tell me why you are looking at
my nose.

THE CHURL. [*panic-stricken.*] I . . .

CYRANO. [*marching up to him.*] Is it
amazing?

THE CHURL. [*shrinking back.*] Your
grace mistook my glance.

CYRANO. Is it pliant, wavering,—like
an elephant's?

THE CHURL. [*same.*] N-n-no.

CYRANO. Or like an owl's beak do you
see it bend?

THE CHURL. But . . .

CYRANO. You discern a wart upon its
end?

THE CHURL. Nay . . .

CYRANO. Perchance, a fly that prome-
nades withal?

Is't hetrolitic?

THE CHURL. Oh! . . .

CYRANO. Phenomenal?

THE CHURL. I was so careful not to
look, God knows.

CYRANO. And why, sir, if you please,
not see my nose?

THE CHURL. I have . . .

CYRANO. Then it disgusts you?

THE CHURL. Sir . . .

CYRANO. In doubtful taste
You find its color?

THE CHURL. Sir . . .

CYRANO. Its form debased?

THE CHURL. Oh, not at all.

CYRANO. Then what's the fault you
charge?

You find my nose, belike, a little
large?

THE CHURL. [*gibbering.*] I find it very
little,—small and wee.

CYRANO. Hey? What? Accuse me of
such idiocy?

Little? My nose? Hola!

THE CHURL. 'Faith! . . .

CYRANO. My enormous nose.

Vile flat-nose, flat-head, man-with-
out-a-nose,
Learn,—this appendage fills my
heart with pride,
For in a large nose always, is
descried
A nature affable and wise and good
Liberal, courageous. Be it under-
stood—
Of all the qualities you dare not
claim,—
You filthy knave, face dedicate to
shame
That should be grateful if I make
it smart.
Equally void . . . [*He cuffs him.*]

THE CHURL. Ouch!

CYRANO. Of grace, of lyric art,
Of vividness,—of all that shines or
glows,
Of richness, glory,—in a word of
Nose—
[*He whirls him about by the shoul-
ders, fitting the action to the word.*]
As . . . what my booted foot shall
swiftly find.

THE CHURL. Help! Help! The Guard!

CYRANO. Let churls keep that in
mind,
Who find the middle of my face a
joke.
To noble jesters,—unlike meaner
folk,—
I give, ere knight and knave escape
together,—
An *inch* of steel, and not a *foot* of
leather.

THE COUNT OF GUICHE. [*coming down
with the marquises.*] He tires
one, in the end.

VISCOUNT OF VALVERT. [*shrugging his
shoulders.*] The fellow blusters.

GUICHE. None musters wit to answer.

VALVERT. No one musters
So much of spirit? Watch me. Let's
make merry.
[*He goes toward CYRANO and
stares at him with a fatuous air.*]
You have a nose . . . a nose . . . a
big nose.

CYRANO. [*gravely.*] Very.

THE VISCOUNT. [*laughing.*] Hee-hee!

CYRANO. [*imperturbable.*] Is that all?

THE VISCOUNT. Well . . .

CYRANO. You are curtailed, young man.
 One might say . . . Oh, good Lord, if one began,—
 Varying the tone; come, let us just suppose,—
 Aggressive: "Sir, if I had such a nose,
 I'd cut it off, so much 'twould cut me up."
 Friendly: "It oft must plunge, sir, in your cup;—
 Best make a goblet of a special shape."
 Descriptive: "'Tis a rock,—a cliff,—a cape.
 A cape, quotha? Surely a promontory."
 Curious: "What is that thing,—let's have the story,—
 A tool box, or, perhaps, a writing case?"
 Gracious: "You must love birds to have a place
 Paternally prepared,—I call it sweet,—
 To make a safe perch for their tiny feet."
 Truculent: "Sir, be careful when you smoke,
 Lest you make trouble for all honest folk,—
 Lest neighbors run and cry, 'A chimney fire!'"
 Careful: "Pray hold your head a little higher,
 Else such a weight will surely make you fall."
 Solicitous: "Sir, take a parasol,
 Lest its bright hue be faded by the sun."
 Pedantic: "Aristophanes knew one,—
 Hippicampelephantecamelos—
 Was made to carry, certes, such a nose."
 Lightly: "Why, friend, a most com-
 modious rack
 To hang one's hat,—where space will never lack."
 Emphatic: "Fierce Euroclydon, behold,
 Needs all his power to give that nose a cold."

Dramatic: "'Tis the Red Sea when it bleeds."

Admiring: "'Tis the sign the chem-
 ist needs."

Lyric: "A conch and you a triton, say?"

Simple: "A monument. When's visiting day?"

Respectful: "Come, the landed gentry greet.

Here's one who has a gable on the street."

Rustic: "Why, look-a-here. A nose? I tell 'un

'Tis a prize turnip,—or a stunted melon."

Soldierly: "Charge, heavy artillery."

Practical: "Put it in the lottery.

Assuredly 'twould be, sir, the Grand Prize."

Or, last, like Pyramus, with stream-
 ing eyes:

"No wonder that nose blushes;—
 wicked traitor

Who mars his master, shaming his Creator."

Here are a few things, sir, you might have said,

Had you or wit or learning. But instead,

You wretched fop who trifle with your betters,

You have no spark of wit;—and as for letters,

You have just four, to write you down a fool.

Had you one grain, from nature or from school,

Before these galleries you might have played

With some such fancies as myself displayed;—

—But not the fourth part of them all have spoke,

Nay, nor the half of one,—for I may joke,

Jest, as my mood or mockery may nerve me,—

But as I serve myself let no man serve me.

GUICHE. [*seeking to lead the petrified*
VISCOUNT away.] VISCOUNT, come away.

VALVERT. But, heavens above,

This ruffian . . . why . . . he hasn't
even a glove;
He has no ribbons, . . . no rosettes
. . . no laces.

CYRANO. Sir, it is on my soul I wear
my graces.

I'm not bedizened like a silly lad.
I go, less gaily, but more nobly, clad.
I walk not forth in garments care-
lessly

Cleaned of affronts or stains. There
walks with me

No conscience blear-eyed, blinking
at the day,

No honour frayed, no scruples in
decay.

When I go forth all sparkles in the
light.

I am beplumed with freedom and
my right.

Not my pinched waist must make
my best appeal.

It is my soul that goes locked up
in steel.

Exploits I wear, not ribbons for my
part,

No curled moustaches, but uplifted
heart.

One man who walks among you still
prefers

Music of ringing truth to ringing
spurs.

THE VISCOUNT. But, sir . . .

CYRANO. I have no gloves? A great
affair!

I still have one, sir, of an ancient
pair.

I found its fellow useful in like
case.

I threw it, for a cause, in someone's
face.

THE VISCOUNT. Braggart and rascal!
Flat foot! Head of cheese!

CYRANO. [*taking off his hat and bowing
low, as if acknowledging an in-
troduction.*] Ah? . . . And I,
Cyrano Savien Hercules,

Of Bergerac. [*Laughter.*]

THE VISCOUNT. [*exasperated.*] Buf-
foon!

CYRANO. [*crying out as if something
hurt him.*] Ouch! Ouch!

THE VISCOUNT. [*who had turned and
was walking away, turning to*

CYRANO.] What? Is there more
to come?

CYRANO. [*with grimaces of pain.*]
I've got to help her out. She has
grown numb.

That shows you it's a foolish thing
to keep . . .

Ouch! . . .

THE VISCOUNT. What's amiss?

CYRANO. My sword has gone to sleep!

THE VISCOUNT. [*drawing his own.*] So
be it.

CYRANO. I've a stroke,—a charming
thing.

THE VISCOUNT. [*scornfully.*] Poet!

CYRANO. Yes, poet, fencing as I sing.

While the steel clashes, I shall im-
provise

A ballad.

THE VISCOUNT. A ballad.

CYRANO. You show surprise?

You don't know what that is?

THE VISCOUNT. But . . .

CYRANO. [*like a pedagogue.*] A ballad,
know,

Must have three stanzas of eight
lines; also

The rule requires an envoy, having
four.

THE VISCOUNT. [*stamping with rage.*]
You . . .

CYRANO. I'll make a ballad, fighting
you; and more,

I'll pink you on the last line.

THE VISCOUNT. No.

CYRANO. No? Let's see;—
[*Declaiming.*] The Ballad of the

Battle of the Hotel Burgundy,—

My Lord Cyrano lends a braggart
fame.

THE VISCOUNT. What do you think that
is?

CYRANO. The ballad's name.

THE HALL. [*excited to the highest
pitch.*] Give place! Oh, most
amusing! . . .

Make a ring!

[*A circle of curious onlookers;
marquises and officers min-
gling with citizens and simple
folk; pages climbing on shoul-
ders to see better; all the
ladies standing in their stalls.
On the right, the COUNT OF*

GUICHE *and his followers.*
Left, LE BRET, RAGUENEAU,
CUIGY, etc.]

CYRANO. *[closing his eyes for a second.]*

Wait. . . I must choose my
rhymes. . . The very thing.

*[He fits action to
rhyme and rhythm.]*

My plumèd hat aside I throw;

Swiftly my mantle is undone;

Lightly I cast it from me, so;

And I unsheath my espadon.

Graceful, superb, as Celadon;

Agile as Scaramouch, I scutch.

I warn you fairly, myrmidon,

At the envoy's end, I touch.

Better that unprovoked I go.

Where were the pinking best
begun?

The brave, slashed sleeve above, . . .
below?

The heart, beneath the blue cor-
don?

The merry music has begun.

A pretty volt,—not overmuch.

That drum it would resound upon.

There, at the envoy's end, I touch.

O for a rhyme, a rhyme in O.

Your cheek is white. Its colours
run.

My rhyme—this pallor that you
show—

You thought to thrust, thou hap-
less one?

I parry,—broach,—the trick is done.

Thy needle hold in careful
clutch,—

That basting needle, Laridon.

At the envoy's end, I touch.

[He announces solemnly.]

Prince, be thy latest prayer begun.

I shift in carte. . . My feint is
such.

And such my lunge. . . Hola, 'tis
done.

[THE VISCOUNT reels.

CYRANO salutes.]

At the envoy's end, I touch.

*[Acclamation. Applause from
the boxes. Flowers and hand-
kerchiefs flutter down. Offi-*

*cers crowd around and felici-
tate CYRANO. RAGUENEAU
dances with enthusiasm. LE
BRET is happy, but uneasy. The
friends of the VISCOUNT sup-
port him and lead him away.]*

THE CROWD. *[with a long breath.]* Ah!

A TROOPER. Superb!

A LADY. Pretty!

RAGUE. Phenomarculous!

A MARQUIS. New!

LE BRET. Madness!

*[A throng about CYRANO. One catches
the words:]*

Felicitations! . . . Bravo! . . . You
Are splendid!

A WOMAN'S VOICE. A hero!

A MUSKETEER. *[advancing toward
CYRANO, his hand extended
eagerly.]* Sir, if you permit,

'Twas well done. And I know the
game a bit.

I never stamped so hard. It made
me cheer. *[He goes off.]*

CYRANO. *[to CUIGY.]* Who's that?

CUIGY. That? That's Artagnan, the
Musketeer.

LE BRET. *[to CYRANO, taking his arm.]*

A talk. . .

CYRANO. Wait till the rabble leaves.

I tire of this.

[To BELLEROSE.] May I stay

BELLE. *[respectfully.]* Yes . . .

*[One hears a tumult
and cries without.]*

JODELET. *[looking out.]* Montfleury

. . . whom they hiss!

BELLE. *[solemnly.]* Sic transit.

*[Changing his tone, as he speaks to
the PORTER, the candle-snuffer.]*

Sweep. Lock up. But leave the
light.

There is a new farce to rehearse
to-night.

Just long enough to dine we toilers
pause.

*[JODELET and BELLEROSE
go out, after having bowed
profoundly to CYRANO.]*

PORTER. *[to CYRANO.]* You do not dine,
sir?

CYRANO. I? No.

[The PORTER goes out.]

LE BRET. *[to CYRANO.]* Why?

CYRANO. [*haughtily.*] Because . . .
 [*Seeing that the PORTER is out of hearing.*]

I have no money.

LE BRET. [*making a gesture of tossing something.*] What you tossed away?

CYRANO. Paternal pension perished in a day.

LE BRET. How will you live this month? Ah, do arrest your Folly. Thrown away! What madness!

CYRANO. What a gesture!
 THE WAITRESS. [*coughing, behind her little counter.*] Hum . . .

[*CYRANO and LE BRET turn. She comes forward shyly.*]

Sir . . . to know you fast . . . it makes me wild. . . .

[*Showing her stand.*] Here, sir, is all you want. . . .

Please . . .

CYRANO. You dear child! .
 Although my Gascon pride forbids my taking

From your kind hands one morsel of your making,

I fear lest I should wound your generous heart.

I shall accept, then . . .

[*He goes to the booth and makes his selection.*]

Of these grapes, a part.

[*She urges him to take the cluster. He takes a grape.*]

Just one. . . . This glass of water.

[*She tries to pour wine in the glass; he checks her.*]

. . . Clear. And, willy nilly,

Half of this macaroon.

[*She tries to make him take a plate of cakes; he breaks one in half and puts part of it back on the plate.*]

LE BRET. But this is silly!

THE WAITRESS. Oh, something more . . .

CYRANO. Yes,—your kind hand to kiss.
 [*He kisses, as if it had been that of a princess, the hand she holds out to him.*]

THE WAITRESS. I thank you, sir.

[*She curtsies.*] Good night.

[*She goes out.*]

SCENE V.

[*CYRANO; LE BRET; later; the PORTER.*]

CYRANO. While eating this,
 I'll hear thy scolding.

[*He sits down at the booth and arranges before him his macaroon.*] Dinner.

[*The glass of water.*] Refreshment.

[*The grape.*] Dessert. I shall dine . . .

O Lord, this giant appetite of mine.
 Thou sayst?

LE BRET. I say, thou dost thy nature wrong,

Being swayed by such a swaggering, braggart throng.

If we sought men of sense, they could inform us

The true effect of acts like this.

CYRANO. [*finishing his macaroon.*] Enormous.

LE BRET. The Cardinal . . .

CYRANO. [*beaming.*] The Cardinal was there?

LE BRET. He must have found . . .

CYRANO. The entertainment fair.

LE BRET. But . . .

CYRANO. He is an author. 'Tis no playwright's way

To mind the ruin of another's play.

LE BRET. Truly, thou mak'st too many enemies.

CYRANO. [*beginning to eat his grape.*] How many for this evening, an it please?

LE BRET. Forty,—without the ladies.

CYRANO. Come, the count.

LE BRET. Montfleury, the old man, son, Guiche, the Count,

Baro, the Academy . . .

CYRANO. Enough, I am satisfied.

LE BRET. Where will it lead at last, this foolish pride?

What is thy aim?

CYRANO. In labyrinths I wandered;

On diverse parts my divers gifts were squandered.

I choose . . .

LE BRET. Eh, which?

CYRANO. This;—Let what will befall

Always I will be admirable, in all.

LE BRET. [*shrugging his shoulders.*]

So be it. But, in confidence between us,

Why do you hate Montfleury?

CYRANO. That Silenus

Thinks he's a lady-killer. And he tries

To cast carp's eyes, with his popped bull-frog's eyes.

I hate him since he dared to let them seek

One day . . . one moment . . . my dear lady's cheek.

Methought I saw a loathly fat slug move

Upon a rose.

LE BRET. [*stupefied.*] Can it be . . .

CYRANO. [*with a bitter laugh.*] That I love?

[*Changing his tone, and gravely.*] I love.

LE BRET. And may thy friend know what thou hast so hidden?

CYRANO. Whom I love? Nay . . .

Look! think! I am forbidden To dream of love how plain soe'er she be,—

My nose arrives so long ahead of me.

Whom do I love then? 'Tis in vain I strive,—

I love,—even I,—the loveliest maid alive.

LE BRET. The loveliest? . . .

CYRANO. Quite simply, 'neath the sun.

Most brilliant, finest,

[*With deep dejection.*] And the fairest one.

LE BRET. Ah, God, who is this lady?

CYRANO. Mortal danger,

Unwitting; fair; to vanity a stranger; Nature's own snare; a moss rose, set apart

Whence love in ambush wings his deadliest dart.

Who sees her smile has seen a perfect thing.

She gives a grace to nothing—everything;

Divinities in her least gesture dwell, Not thou, O Venus, rising from thy shell,

Nor thou, Diana, in thy woodland, fair

As she in Paris in her sedan chair.

LE BRET. Sapristi! It is clear.

CYRANO. Transparent man.

LE BRET. Thy cousin, Magdeleine Robin?

CYRANO. Yes, Roxane.

LE BRET. Thou lovest her? Tell her! For I do surmise

Thou art to-day a hero in her eyes.

CYRANO. Nay. Shall I woo the loveliest maid in France,—

Look at me, friend,—with this protuberance?

Ah, I have no illusions. Though in faith,

Sometimes, enchanted by the twilight's breath,

I walk in gardens; smell the dew-wet rose

—Yes, with my poor big devil of a nose,—

I breathe Spring's magic. 'Neath a silver ray

I watch a lover and a maiden stray;

I dream, even I, of walking 'neath that beam,

Loving, beloved, scarce moving. As I dream

My soul expands, exults, but soars to fall.

I see my profile shadowed on the wall.

LE BRET. [*moved.*] My friend.

CYRANO. I have bad moments, friend. Sometimes I keep

Apart, knowing myself so ugly and . . .

LE BRET. [*tenderly, seizing his hand.*] You weep?

CYRANO. No, never that. Ah, how could you suppose

I would let a tear roll down this length of nose?

Never will I, so long as I am master, Let beauty so divine meet such disaster,—

Ugliness mar perfection. There appears

Upon this earth naught more sublime than tears,

I would submit to torture, on my word,

Rather than make a single tear absurd.

LE BRET. Love is a hazard always.
Why despair?

CYRANO. Loving Nile's sorceress, have
I Cæsar's air?

Adoring Berenice, am I Titus?

LE BRET. Thy courage, man! Thy
wit! Say,—did she slight us,
The little one who spread your
modest feast?

Thou art not hateful in her eyes at
least.

CYRANO. [*impressed.*] That's true.

LE BRET. Well, then. I, too,
saw Roxane quail,
Turn pale to watch thy duel.

CYRANO. Roxane . . .
pale?

LE BRET. Hearts follow oft where ad-
miration goes.

Speak to her. Speak.

CYRANO. If she should
mock my nose?

No! That's the only thing on earth
I fear.

PORTER. [*who admits someone, to*
CYRANO.]

Sir, someone seeks . . .

CYRANO. [*seeing ROXANE'S DUENNA.*]
God! Her duenna, here!

SCENE VI.

[CYRANO, LE BRET, the DUENNA.]

DUENNA. [*with a profound curtsey.*]
To her brave cousin, one sends greet-
ing, who

Wishes in secret to see him.

CYRANO. [*overwhelmed.*] See me?

DUENNA. [*with another curtsey.*] Yes,
you.

Since one has things to tell you.

CYRANO. Th . . . things?

DUENNA. [*bobbing another curtsey.*]
To say.

CYRANO. [*trembling.*] Lord God!

DUENNA. One goes to-morrow at the
first pink ray

Of dawn, to hear mass at St. Roche.

CYRANO. [*leaning on LE BRET for sup-
port.*] Lord God! . . . to pray.

. . . .

DUENNA. On coming out, where may
one speak a word?

CYRANO. [*babbling.*] Where? . . . I
. . . God . . . where?

O my lord! . . .

DUENNA. Say quickly.

CYRANO. I . . . am thinking . . . I
. . . am bound . . .

DUENNA. Where?

CYRANO. . . . Ragueneau, . . . the
. . . pastry cook's . . .

DUENNA. And he is found? . . .

CYRANO. What street?—St. Honoré.—
My God! I swear . . .

DUENNA. [*withdrawing.*] At seven,
then. Be there.

CYRANO. Yes, . . . I'll
be there.

[*The DUENNA goes out.*]

SCENE VII.

[CYRANO, LE BRET; *later, the*
Actors, CUIGY, BRISSAILLE, LI-
GNÈRE; PORTER, VIOLINS.]

CYRANO. [*falling into LE BRET's arms.*]
Me . . . to meet her!

LE BRET. Eh! did I not insist?

CYRANO. She knows,—at least she
knows, that I exist.

LE BRET. And now thou wilt be calm?

CYRANO. Now I will be
Frantic and fulminating, fearless,
free.

A bannered army could not fright me
now.

I have ten hearts and twenty arms,
I vow.

Give me not dwarfs . . .

[*He cries aloud.*]

Give giants to disperse.

[*In the background, the*
stage has been filling
with players, who move
about, whispering; they
begin reciting their lines;
the VIOLINS take their
places.]

A VOICE. Silence, in front. We're go-
ing to rehearse.

CYRANO. [*laughing.*] We are going.
[*He goes up, just as the great door*

at the back partly opens and admits CUIGY, BRISSAILLE, and a number of officers, who support LIGNIÈRE, who is helplessly, completely, drunk.]

CUIGY. Cyrano!

CYRANO. What's this?

CUIGY. Well may'st

thou stare,—

Drunk as an owl.

CYRANO. [*recognizing him.*] Hola!

What's wrong, Lignièr?

CUIGY. He sought thee.

BRIS. For he can't go home.

CYRANO. Why not?

LIGN. [*thickly, and displaying a crumpled bit of paper.*] Thish letter sash . . . a hundred . . . a great lot,

Lyn' in wait; . . . don't like that song of mine.

At the Nesle Gate. . . I'm sleepy.

Can't get mine,

So I'll take thy bed, if thou'lt gimme room.

CYRANO. A hundred men? Nay, thou shalt sleep at home!

LIGN. [*startled.*] But . . .

CYRANO. [*in a terrible voice, pointing to the link held by the porter, who has stopped to listen.*]

Take that light. [*LIGNIÈRE seizes it precipitately.*] And march. For I have said

I'll be your shelter. I will make your bed. [*To the officers.*]

Come ye, as witnesses. But do not press.

CUIGY. A hundred!

CYRANO. I to-night could meet no less.

[*The players, coming down from the stage, in divers costumes, crowd around.*]

LE BRET. But why protect . . .

CYRANO. Le Bret, who scolds at once!

LE BRET. This drunken fool?

CYRANO. Because this drunken dunce,

This keg of wine, this sodden liquor tun,

Once, in my sight, a pretty thing has done.

Coming from Mass, he saw his mistress take

Some holy water, and for her sweet sake,

He,—who fears water,—to the font did fly

And bravely bent his head and drank it dry.

AN ACTRESS. [*costumed as an Abigail.*]

Ah, that was gentle.

CYRANO. Was't not, Abigail?

THE ACTRESS. [*to the others.*] But why five score to make one poet quail?

CYRANO. Forward! And you, sirs, who shall see me fight,

I charge you come not nigh, whatever my plight.

ANOTHER ACTRESS. [*jumping from the stage.*] I am going to see.

CYRANO. Come.

ANOTHER. [*leaping from the stage, to an older actor.*] Come thou, Cassander.

CYRANO. Come all, the Doctor, Isabelle, Leander.

Come, charming, motley multitude!

We'll see

Italian farce with Spanish tragedy.

To our alarms add your raptures keen,

As tinkling bells surround a tambourine.

ALL THE ACTRESSES. [*in a joyful flurry.*] A mantle! Quick, my hood! The play begins.

JODELET. We'll go.

CYRANO. [*to the orchestra.*] Come, play an air, ye violins.

[*The VIOLINS join the procession that is forming. Somebody snatches the lighted candles from the sconces that make the torchlight parade.*]

Bravo. The soldiers, players in costume,

And twenty paces in advance . . .

[*He goes forward as he speaks.*] My plume.

Above my brow let flames of glory flicker,—

Prouder than Scipio and thrice Nasica!

'Tis understood? No man shall aid
me, more
Than by his presence. Now . . .
fling wide the door.

[The PORTER throws the
great door open. A corner
of old Paris is seen
in the dim moonlight.]

Paris before us, wrapped in veils of
mist,

Her sloping roofs by passing moon-
beams kissed.

Exquisite frame for our heroic scene.
The Seine below, though mists may
intervene,

Lies like a magic mirror, tremblingly
Waiting, like you, to see—what you
shall see!

ALL. To the Nesle Gate!

CYRANO. [*erect on the threshold.*] To
the Nesle Gate!

ALL. Nesle Gate!

CYRANO. [*before starting, he turns to
the actress, ABIGAIL.*] I think,
my dear, 'twas you who asked
of late

Why five score cut-throats on one
may attend?

[*He draws his sword,
and, tranquilly.*]

'Twas known the rhymers had me for
a friend.

[*He goes out. The pro-
cession, with LIGNIÈRE
zigzagging at the head,
then the actresses on the
arms of the officers, then
the actors pranking as
they go, marches into the
night, to the music of the
violins and illuminated by
the flickering brightness
of the candles.*]

[*Curtain.*]

ACT II

THE POET'S BAKE SHOP

The shop of RAGUENEAU, roaster and
pastry cook. A great kitchen at the in-

tersection of St. Honoré and Arbre Sec.
Seen through the glass panes in the
door, at the back, the streets are gray
in the first light of dawn.

In the foreground, at the left, a coun-
ter is surmounted by a stand of
wrought iron, from which depend
geese, ducks, and white peacocks. In
big crockery vases are common garden
flowers, chiefly sunflowers. On the
same side, farther back, a huge fire-
place, in front of which, between mon-
strous andirons on each of which is a
small kettle, roasts turn and sizzle into
dripping-pans.

At the right, front, a door. Farther
back, a staircase leads to a tiny dining-
room under the roof, a little room whose
interior is seen through the open shut-
ters; a table is set and a tiny Flemish
lustre is lighted. A wooden gallery,
following the staircase, seems to lead to
the other little dining-rooms.

In the middle of the shop, an iron
ring hung with game, may be lifted or
lowered by a chain.

The ovens glow in the shadows under
the staircase. Copper gleams. The
spits turn. Pastries in pyramids.
Hams hung from hooks.

It is the busy hour when the ovens
are heated hottest. A swarm of scared
scullions, fat cooks and little 'prentices.
A sea of caps bedecked with chicken
feathers or guinea wings. On great
pieces of sheet iron, or in wicker trays,
are quantities of pastries and fancy
dishes of all kinds.

Tables are spread with platters of
cakes and rolls. Some, with chairs
placed, await their guests.

A little table in a corner is covered
with a mass of papers.

RAGUENEAU is discovered there, as
the curtain rises. He is writing.

SCENE I.

[RAGUENEAU; Cooks and 'Pren-
tices; later, LISE. RAGUENEAU,
at the little table, writing with
a rapt air and counting on his
fingers.]

1ST COOK. [*showing a mounted piece.*] Almond cakes!

2ND COOK. [*bringing a mold.*] Custard.

3RD COOK. [*bringing a roast dish decked with feathers.*] Peacock.

4TH COOK. [*carrying a tray.*] Brown roast.

5TH COOK. [*bringing an earthenware dish.*] Stew.

RAGUE. [*quits writing and raises his head.*] Upon the saucepans gleams the dawn anew.

Stifle, my soul, thy song, the gods' best dower.

The late's hour passes,—'tis the oven's hour.

[*He stands up. To a cook.*]

A dust of flour. That pastry is too short.

THE COOK. How much?

RAGUE. Two feet.

[*He passes, leaving the cook staring after him and saying:.*] Huh?

1ST PASTRY COOK. A tartlet.

2ND COOK. A new sort.

RAGUE. [*standing in front of the fireplace.*] Depart, my Muse. I pray thee now retire,

Lest thy sweet eyes be reddened by my fire.

[*To a pastry cook, pointing to some fancy pastry.*]

You have misplaced the dent in all these dishes.

Caesura falls between the hemistiches.

[*To another, showing an imperfect tart.*]

This pasty palace lacks, as yet, a roof.

[*To a small apprentice who, sitting on the floor, is stringing poultry on a spit.*]

Place thou on this long rod, at my behoof,

The modest pullet, turkey cock superb;—

Alternate them, my son, as old Malherbe

Used measures long, then short. So I discern

My roasts like strophes on the spit shall turn.

ANOTHER APPRENTICE. [*advancing with a dish carefully covered.*]

Master, I've made, because of my desire

To please you this . . . this pastry.

[*He uncovers the dish and proudly displays a great pastry model of . . .*]

RAGUE. [*dazzled.*] It's a lyre!

THE APPRENTICE. All of puff pastry.

RAGUE. [*touched.*] And of sugared fruit.

THE APPRENTICE. See, sir, I made spun sugar cords, to boot.

RAGUE. [*giving him a piece of silver.*] Go drink my health.

[*He sees LISE, who enters.*] My wife. 'Sh. Make no fuss.

And hide the coin!

[*To LISE, showing the lyre with some embarrassment.*]

Handsome?

LISE. Ridiculous.

[*She puts a pile of paper sacks on the table.*]

RAGUE. Sacks? Thank you. That is good.

[*He examines them.*] My precious books!

To hold the biscuit some apprentice cooks!

The verses of my friends, dismembered thus!

So the bacchantes dealt with Orpheus.

LISE. [*acidly.*] I couldn't make them into coin nor raiment,—

And that was all them poets left in payment.

Yes, every poet left some limping line.

RAGUE. Ant, who insult my cicadas divine!

LISE. Before they came, though praise was always scanty,

You never called me ant,—nor yet bacchante!

RAGUE. To use poems so!

LISE. To find a use for those!

RAGUE. Woman, I wonder what you'd do to prose.

SCENE II.

[*The Same; Two Children who have entered.*]

RAGUE. What do you want, dears?

1ST CHILD. Three pies.

RAGUE. [*serving them.*] Well-browned, see?

And smoking hot.

2ND CHILD. Please wrap 'em up for me.

RAGUE. [*aside, distressed.*] Alas, my bags!

[*To the child.*] Huh? Wrap them up? Let's see.

[*He takes a sack and as he is about to put the pies in it, he reads.*]

"Even as Ulysses left Penelope . . ."
Not that one.

[*He puts it aside and takes another. As he is putting the cakes in it, he reads.*]

"Ah, fair Phœbus." Oh, not this.

LISE. [*impatiently.*] What makes you dally so?

RAGUE. [*takes a third, resignedly.*]
Child, here it is.

"Sonnet to Phyllis." All the same, I warn ye
It's hard.

LISE. [*shrugging her shoulders.*]

Well, well, at last! . . . The silly
Sawny!

[*She climbs on a chair and begins to arrange the china on a plate rail.*]

RAGUE. [*profiting by the fact that her back is turned, recalls the children who are at the door.*]

'Pst, dears. Bring back the sonnet on the sack.

I'll make it six pies, if you bring it back.

[*The children hand back the bag with avidity, clutch the six pies and go out. RAGUENEAU, ripping the bag open with his thumb, begins to read, declaiming.*]

"Phyllis!" That sweet name but-
tered! And a smudge of flour.
"Phyllis!"

[CYRANO enters hurriedly.]

SCENE III.

[RAGUENEAU, LISE, CYRANO; later,
the TROOPER.]

CYRANO. What time is it?

RAGUE. [*bowing profoundly.*] Six
o'clock.

CYRANO. [*with emotion.*] In one hour!

RAGUE. [*following him.*] Bravo! I
saw . . .

CYRANO. Eh? What?

RAGUE. Your combat.

CYRANO. Combat?

RAGUE. At the Hotel of Burgundy.

CYRANO. [*disdainfully.*] Oh, that!

RAGUE. [*admiringly.*] Duel in verse.

LISE. He just can't say too much.

CYRANO. Come now. That's good.

RAGUE. [*fencing with a basting needle which he seizes.*] "At the en-
voy's end, I touch."

"At the envoy's end I touch." And
done just so.

[*With mounting enthusiasm.*] "At
the envoy's end. . ."

CYRANO. What time is it,
Ragueneau?

RAGUE. [*still on guard, basting needle poised, looks at the clock.*] Five
minutes past. "I touch." That's
hard to match.

LISE. [*to CYRANO, who in passing the counter has absentmindedly pressed his hand.*] What is the
matter with your hand?

CYRANO. A scratch.

RAGUE. You've been in peril.

CYRANO. No. None. Be at ease.

LISE. [*shaking her finger at him.*] I
think you're lying.

CYRANO. Does my nose blush, Lise?
I must have told a most enormous
lie. . . . I . . .

[*Changing his manner.*] I expect
some one. And if . . . they . . .
pass not by,

You will leave us quite alone.

RAGUE. Alone! That chance
has passed.
My rhymers come.
LISE. [*ironically.*] And come to
break their fast.
CYRANO. Take them away, when I
shall give the sign.
What time is it?
RAGUE. Ten minutes past.
CYRANO. [*nervously, seating himself at
RAGUENEAU's table, and taking a
sheet of paper.*] A quill.
RAGUE. [*offering him the one stuck
above his own ear.*]
Sir, honour mine!
This swan's quill.
A TROOPER. [*with splendid moustaches,
and very resplendent, enters and
in a stentorian voice calls.*]
Greeting.
CYRANO. [*turning and looking.*]
Who's that?
RAGUE. Friend of my wife's. I'm told
—By him,—a famous warrior.
CYRANO. [*taking the quill and dismiss-
ing RAGUENEAU with a gesture.*]
To write . . . to fold . . .
[*To himself.*] To give it to her and
to fly.
[*He throws down the pen.*] Poltroon!
I cannot for my life . . .
[*To RAGUENEAU.*] What time is it?
RAGUE. Soon
'Twill be a quarter past.
CYRANO. [*striking his breast.*] Speak
one word of all
My heart says ceaselessly . . .
Whate'er befall,
I'll write this letter, written in my
heart
A hundred times already; so my part,
Putting my soul upon this paper fair,
Is but to copy what is graven there.
[*He writes. Through
the glass panes in the
door one sees thin,
hesitating shadows.*]

SCENE IV.

[RAGUENEAU, LISE, the TROOPER;
CYRANO; writing at the little

table; the POETS, dressed in
black, ungartered, stockings
muddy.]

LISE. [*to RAGUENEAU.*] There is your
crew.
1ST POET. [*entering, to RAGUENEAU.*]
Brother!
2ND POET. [*grasping RAGUENEAU's
hand.*] Fellow, beyond com-
pare!
3RD POET. Eagle of Pastry Cooks.
[*He snuffs the air.*] Your aerie's air
Is sweet.
4TH POET. O Phoebus Roaster!
5TH POET. Cook of harmonies.
RAGUE. [*surrounded, embraced, patted
on the shoulder.*] How these
great men do make you feel at
ease!
1ST POET. We were retarded by the
swarming crowd
About the Nesle Gate.
2ND POET. There, without a shroud,
Eight bloody brigands on the stones
below.
CYRANO. [*raising his head for a mo-
ment.*] Eight? I thought,
seven.
RAGUE. Master, do you know
The hero of this combat?
CYRANO. [*indifferently.*] I? No.
LISE. [*to the TROOPER.*] You?
TROOPER. [*twirling his moustaches.*]
Maybe.
CYRANO. [*writing, apart; from time to
time one hears a murmured
word.*] I love you.
1ST POET. One, they say,—a sight to
see,—
Put all the band to flight.
2ND POET. A strange heap lies
There on the stones,—pikes,
bludgeons . . .
CYRANO. [*writing.*] Your sweet
eyes . . .
3RD POET. They have found hats clean
to the dockyard slips.
1ST POET. Gad, he must be ferocious.
CYRANO. Your dear lips.
1ST POET. Giant and hero must that
man appear.
CYRANO. [*writing.*] Beholding you, I
almost swoon with fear.

2ND POET. [*to RAGUENEAU, while he snaps up a cake.*] What new rhymes have you written?

CYRANO. *How divine . . .*
[He writes: a few words more, is about to sign the letter, but checks himself, and rising, thrusts it into his doublet.]

I'll give it her myself. What need to sign?

RAGUE. [*to the SECOND POET.*] A recipe in verse.

3RD POET. [*installing himself near a plate of cream puffs.*]

Let's hear, say I.

4TH POET. [*looking at a tart he has taken.*] This sweet thing has her bonnet quite awry.

[He removes it with one bite.]

1ST POET. This gingerbread pursues a famished lover

With almond eyes angelic eyebrows cover. *[He breaks off a piece.]*

2ND POET. We listen . . .

3RD POET. [*lightly pinching a cream puff.*] The puff's already touched, you see.

2ND POET. [*eating a piece of the puff-paste lyre.*] For the first time, the lyre has nourished me.

RAGUE. [*ready to recite, coughs, straightens his cap, strikes an attitude.*] A Recipe in Verse.

2ND POET. [*nudging FIRST POET.*] You breakfast?

1ST POET. [*to SECOND POET.*] On your part,

You dine?

RAGUE. *The Way To Make An Almond Tart.*

Stir, but do not beat, one begs,
 Certain eggs.

Beat into the yelky batter
 Lemons sour.

Then you pour
 Sweet milk of almonds, later.

Now, puff paste lightly fold
 Into a mold.

With skillful touch
 Put apricots to hide
 The paste inside.

Haste not too much

As custard fills each well;—

Yet, e'er they swell

Be sure the baking starts.

They troop out light and fair.

See them there,—

Lovely almond tarts.

POETS. [*talking with their mouths full.*] Exquisite! Oh, delicious!

A POET. [*choking.*] Humph.

[They go back, eating.]

CYRANO, who has been watching them, goes to RAGUENEAU.]

CYRANO. Lulled by thy voice,
 See'st thou not how they pilfer?

RAGUE. [*whispering and smiling.*] It's my choice.

I see but look away, to save them trouble.

And, so to say, my verses serve me double.

I have my weakness, sir. I find it sweet

To read my rhymes and let the hungry eat.

CYRANO. [*clapping him on the shoulder.*] Thou pleasest me.

[RAGUENEAU goes to rejoin his friends. CYRANO follows him with his eyes, and then, rather sternly.] Ho, Lise.

[LISE, in tender conversation with the TROOPER, starts, and comes forward to CYRANO.] This Captain here

Lays siege? . . .

LISE. [*with injured dignity.*] I can protect my virtue,—never fear.

My downcast eyes can lift and flash,
 and so . . .

CYRANO. I find your downcast eyes look somewhat low.

Your husband pleases me, so . . .
 mind your eyes.

Let no one wrong him, and no man despise.

LISE. But . . .

CYRANO. [*who has raised his voice so the gallant can hear.*] To a wise listener. . . .

[He salutes the TROOPER, and goes to watch near

*the door, having looked
at the clock.]*

LISE. I'm surprised. Suppose
[*to the TROOPER, who has merely
returned CYRANO's salute.*]
You call him! . . . Make remarks
. . . about his nose.

TROOPER. His nose . . . His nose . . .
[*He hastens farther off,
LISE following.*]

CYRANO. [*at the door motions to
RAGUENEAU to take his POETS away.*]
'Pst . . .

RAGUE. [*showing the POETS the door at
the left.*] We shall have quiet
here.

CYRANO. [*impatently.*] 'Pst! . . .
'Pst . . .

RAGUE. . . . To read
Our poems.

1ST POET. [*despairingly, with his
mouth full.*] But the pastry?

2ND POET. . . . Take it along.
[*They troop after RAGUENEAU,
having rifled the platters.*]

SCENE V.

[CYRANO, ROXANE, the DUENNA.]

CYRANO. . . . Indeed,
I'll draw the letter out if there appear
One ray of hope.

[*ROXANE, masked, followed
by the DUENNA, appears at
the panes in the door. He
hurriedly throws it open.*]

Come in! . . .

[*He marches up to the DUENNA.*]
Two words, duenna, hear.

DUENNA. Four.

CYRANO. Do you love eating?

DUENNA. . . . Aye, to make me ill.

CYRANO. [*hastily taking some paper
bags from the counter.*] Good.
Here's a sonnet. . . .

DUENNA. Huh?

CYRANO. . . . Which I dared to fill
With cream cakes.

DUENNA. [*her expression changing.*]
Oh!

CYRANO. . . . Perhaps you haven't seen
The little cake they call an alman-
dine?

DUENNA. Oh, I adore them. No word
is too strong.

CYRANO. I plunge six in the bosom of
a song,—

One by Saint-Amand. Chapelain's
verses soon

Shall seem less heavy for this maca-
roon.

Do you like fruit cakes?

DUENNA. . . . I could sit and eat
Forever . . .

CYRANO. [*piling her arms with the
bulging bags.*] Kindly do it, in
the street.

DUENNA. But . . .

CYRANO. [*pushing her out.*] And
don't come back, while there's a
dust of flour.

[*He closes the door, and comes
down toward ROXANE, and
stops, his head bared, at a
respectful distance.*]

SCENE VI.

[CYRANO, ROXANE, the DUENNA
for an instant.]

CYRANO. Blessèd above its fellows be
the hour,

When you remembered that I
breathe,—the day

Thrice blest when from so far you
came to say . . .

To say . . . ?

ROXANE. First of all,—thank you, that
a man I hated

Was by your valor utterly check-
mated.

'Tis he . . . a certain lord . . .

CYRANO. . . . Of Guiche?

ROXANE. . . . Had planned
To impose as husband . . .

CYRANO. . . . Whom he could
command.

[*Bowing.*] My fight becomes a
worthier emprise,—

Not for my ugly nose, but your sweet
eyes.

ROXANE. And then . . . I wanted . . .
Oh, to tell this other,

I must recall in you the almost
brother

When we were playmates . . . call
our childhood back.

CYRANO. You spent the summers, then,
at Bergerac.

ROXANE. You fashioned swords of
reeds down by the lake.

CYRANO. And corn silk gave your pup-
pets curls to shake.

ROXANE. That was our playtime.

CYRANO. There wild
berries grew.

ROXANE. And you did everything I
asked you to.

CYRANO. Roxane in pinafores was
Madeleine.

ROXANE. And was I pretty then?

CYRANO. You were
not plain!

ROXANE. Sometimes, in climbing, you
would scratch your fingers.

Then, playing mother,—how the
memory lingers,—

I'd tell you, in a voice that tried to
scold. [*She takes his hand.*]

"Now how did you do that? . . . A
boy so old."

[*She stops, distressed.*]

Oh, mercy! This is dreadful.
This . . .

[*He tries to take
his hand away.*]

No. Bring

It close. A great, big boy like you!
A pretty thing!

Where didst thou do it?

CYRANO. At the Nesle
Gate where I went to play.

ROXANE. [*sitting down at table and
moistening her handkerchief in
a glass of water.*] Give it to
me.

CYRANO. [*sitting down, too.*] So
gentle, and so gay!

ROXANE. And while I wash the blood
off, tell me then

There were against you . . . ?

CYRANO. Not quite five
score men.

ROXANE. Tell me!

CYRANO. Nay, let that go.
Can you declare

The thing but now you dared not
say . . . ?

ROXANE. But now, I dare.

[*She is still wiping the blood
from his wounded hand.*]

Winds from the past have given me
strength to prove

My courage. . . . There is someone
. . . that . . . I love.

CYRANO. Ah!

ROXANE. One who does not know
it.

CYRANO. Ah!

ROXANE. Not yet.

CYRANO. Ah!

ROXANE. Who soon shall know on
whom my heart is set.

CYRANO. Ah!

ROXANE. A poor boy who loves
me timidly,

Humbly, . . . afar . . . and dares
not speak to me.

CYRANO. Ah!

ROXANE. Leave me your hand. 'Tis
fevered. But I read

The vows that trembled on his lips
unsaid.

CYRANO. Ah!

ROXANE. [*finishing the little bandage
she has made for the wounded
hand.*] And . . . I must say it
quick . . . lest I repent,—

He serves, my cousin, in your regi-
ment.

CYRANO. Ah!

ROXANE. [*laughing.*] And is cadet in
your own company.

CYRANO. Ah!

ROXANE. His brow shows genius all
the world must see.

Brave, proud, young, beautiful . . .

CYRANO. [*rising, deathly pale.*] Beau-
tiful?

ROXANE. You spring

Up, pale. What is it?

CYRANO. Naught. This
. . . this . . .

[*He indicates his hand and smiles.*]

. . . this . . . pretty thing.

ROXANE. I love him. . . But . . . I
should confess, maybe,

. . . I've only seen him at the
Comedy.

CYRANO. You have not talked?

ROXANE. No. . . . Only
with our eyes.

CYRANO. How do you know, then . . . ?

ROXANE. Under evening
skies,
Under the limes, one speaks . . .
and gossips tell.
One listens, if the heart declare as
well.

CYRANO. He is of the Guards?

ROXANE. He enters as cadet.

CYRANO. His name?

ROXANE. Christian, Baron
of Neuville.

CYRANO. He isn't of the Guards.

ROXANE. Yes, since this
morning.

CYRANO. 'Twill wound her heart, yet
must I speak this warning.

Poor dear. . . .

DUENNA. [*opening the door at the
back.*] I ate them, Sieur of
Bergerac.

CYRANO. Then read the sonnets writ
upon the sack!

[*The DUENNA disappears.*]

CYRANO. [*to ROXANE.*] Poor little
one,—You who devote your
youth

To lovely thoughts, what if he prove
uncouth?

ROXANE. He is curled like Urfé's
heroes, for the world!

CYRANO. A man may be ill spoken
though well curled!

ROXANE. Nay, all his words are per-
fect, I divine!

CYRANO. All words are fine, if the
moustache be fine!

—But if he prove a dullard . . . ?

ROXANE. I shall die!

CYRANO. [*after a pause.*] You brought
me here to tell me this?

But why? . . .

Your object, madam,—that eludes
me still.

ROXANE. Oh, yesternight a chance
word sent a chill

Into my soul. . . . You're all of
Gascony . . .

And . . .

CYRANO. They say we try the mettle,—
Ah, I see,—

Of all outsiders who, by God His
grace

Find with us sons of Gascony a place.
Is it that they told you?

ROXANE. Yes. Ah, you can
see

I tremble for him.

CYRANO. [*between his teeth.*] And not
causelessly!

ROXANE. So, when so splendidly but
yesternight

I saw your sword-play,—saw you
put to flight

All who opposed,—I thought, if he
befriend him . . .

CYRANO. Your little baron's safe. I
will defend him.

ROXANE. Oh, truly? Will you be my
love's defender?

Our friendship always has been
strong and tender.

CYRANO. Yes, yes.

ROXANE. You'll be his friend?

CYRANO. I'll be his friend.

ROXANE. No duels?

CYRANO. I have sworn. You
may depend.

ROXANE. Oh, I do love you. . . . I
must take my flight.

[*She hurriedly puts on her mask, ad-
justs her lace scarf, and absent-
mindedly.*] You haven't told
me of your famous fight

At the Nesle Gate. . . . Surely a
time of stress . . .

—Tell him to write . . .

[*She throws him a
kiss with the tips
of her fingers.*]
Oh, I love you!

CYRANO. Yes, yes.

ROXANE. A hundred men against you?
. . . Good-bye, then.

We are such friends.

CYRANO. Yes, yes!

ROXANE. Tell him! . . . A hundred
men!

You'll tell me, some day. . . . Hero,
to evince

Such courage. Oh, superb!

CYRANO. [*saluting her.*] I have
done better since.

[*She goes out. CYRANO
remains motionless, his
eyes on the ground.
Silence. The door on the
Right opens. RAGUENEAU
puts his head in.*]

SCENE VII.

[CYRANO, RAGUENEAU, the POETS, CARBON OF CASTEL-JALOUX, the CADETS, the Crowd of Admirers; later, the COUNT OF GUICHE.]

RAGUE. May we come back?

CYRANO. [motionless.] Yes.

[RAGUENEAU beckons and his friends the POETS re-enter. At the same time, by the door at the back, appears CARBON OF CASTEL-JALOUX in Captain's uniform. He comes in, delighted at having found CYRANO.]

CARBON. Here he is!

CYRANO. [raising his head.] Captain.

CARBON. [exulting.] Ho, Our hero! We know all! And you must go,—

Thirty cadets await you . . .

CYRANO. But . . . [He draws back.]

CARBON. [trying to take him.] Just across

The corner yonder.

CYRANO. No.

CARBON. At the Traitor's Cross.

CYRANO. I . . .

CARBON. [goes to the door and calls in a voice of thunder.] Hero refuses. In the devil's own humor. [Tumult without. Clatter of swords and boots, coming closer.]

CARBON. [rubbing his hands together.]

Crossing the street. Maybe you heard a rumor?

THE CADETS. [pouring into the kitchen.] Zounds! 'Sdeath! Thousand Devils! Caputdedius!

RAGUE. [shrinking back before this onslaught.] Sirs, be ye Gascons all?

THE CADETS. Aye, all of us.

A CADET. [to CYRANO.] Bravo!

CYRANO. Baron! . . .

ANOTHER. [wringing his hand.] Vivat!

CYRANO. Baron! . . .

3RD CADET. I must embrace . . .

CYRANO. Baron!

A NUMBER OF CADETS. Let's all embrace him!

CYRANO. [not knowing to whom to

speak first.] Barons . . . give you grace.

RAGUE. Sirs, are ye barons all?

THE CADETS. All.

RAGUE. Each that breathes?

1ST CADET. Could build a tower of our baronial wreaths.

LE BRET. [entering and rushing up to CYRANO.] They seek for you,— a crowd, delirious, led

By those who saw last night the blood you shed.

CYRANO. [horried.] You told them where to find me?

LE BRET. [rubbing his hands together contentedly.] But, indeed!

A CITIZEN. [entering, followed by a group.] The world of fashion follows, and we lead!

[Without, the street is filled with the fashionable world. Sedan chairs and coaches stop in front of the shop.]

LE BRET. [low, smiling, to CYRANO.] And Roxane?

CYRANO. [tensely]. Ah, be still!

RAGUE. [on a table, as a mob bursts into the pastry shop.] Hey! my stand

Is wrecked, my molds are broken! Ain't it grand?

VARIOUS PEOPLE. [surrounding CYRANO.] My friend . . .

My friend . . . My friend . . .

CYRANO. I had not, yesterday, So many friends.

A LITTLE MARQUIS. [running up, hands outstretched.] If thou knewest, . . . if, I say, . . .

CYRANO. If thou? If thou? Did we herd goats together?

ANOTHER MARQUIS. I'd have you meet some ladies who . . .

CYRANO. [icily.] What other Will first present you to me?

LE BRET. [confounded.] Thou dost ill. What ails thee, Cyrano?

CYRANO. Ah, thou be still!

A MAN OF LETTERS. [with a writing board.] May I have the details . . . ?

CYRANO. No.

LE BRET. [nudging CYRANO.] That is Renaudot,

Inventor of the new gazette.

CYRANO. Just so.

LE BRET. The sheet that tells what all men do or hear,—

They say it has a future, that idea.

A POET. [*advancing.*] Sir . . .

CYRANO. More! . . .

THE POET. Your name in pentacrostic, sir. I wish

To read to . . .

ANOTHER. Sir . . .

CYRANO. Enough! . . .

[*A stir in the crowded room. The crowd ranges itself in two rows. The COUNT OF GUICHE appears with an escort of officers. CUIGY, BRISSAILLE, and the officers who went with CYRANO at the end of the first act. CUIGY comes hurriedly to CYRANO.*]

CUIGY. The Count of Guiche!

[*A murmur of excitement. Everybody makes way.*]

Marshal of Gassion bade him take occasion . . .

THE COUNT OF GUICHE. [*saluting CYRANO.*] He bade me bear to you his admiration

Of the new exploit whose report has run . . .

THE CROWD. Bravo!

CYRANO. [*bowing.*] No better judge of courage could be won.

GUICHE. He could not have believed your enterprise,

But they who told had seen it.

CUIGY. With our eyes!

LE BRET. [*aside, to CYRANO, whose thoughts seem far away.*]

But . . .

CYRANO. Ah, be still.

LE BRET. Thou seem'st to suffer.

CYRANO. [*trembling and turning quickly.*] Zounds!

Before the world? Watch!

[*His moustache bristles; his chest heaves.*]

GUICHE. [*to whom CUIGY has whispered something.*] Your career abounds

In exploits, and you serve, they tell me thus,

With these mad Gascons?

CYRANO. Yes.

A CADET. [*in a huge voice.*] He is one of Us.

GUICHE. [*looking at the Gascons ranged behind CYRANO.*]

Ha! All these gentlemen in haughty rows,

Are they the famous . . .

CARBON OF CASTEL-JALOUX. Cyrano!

CYRANO. Captain?

CARBON. I propose,—

The Company's all present, as for mount,—

Pray you, present the Gascons to the Count.

CYRANO. [*taking two steps toward the COUNT OF GUICHE and presenting the CADETS.*]

These are Gascony's darling cadets

Of Carbon of Castel-Jaloux;

Brazen braggarts, each man of them bets,

—These are Gascony's darling cadets,—

That for blasons and chevrons and frets

No kingling can rank with our crew.

These are Gascony's darling cadets

Of Carbon of Castel-Jaloux.

Stork's leg, eagle eye, none forgets,
Cat's moustache with wolf fangs
showing too.

If a cur snarls, no quarter he gets.

Stork's leg, eagle eye, none forgets.

On his head an old beaver each sets,

—Plume acock though the wind
whistles through!—

Stork's leg, eagle eye, none forgets,

Cat's moustache with wolf fangs
showing too!

Crack-pates and slash-bellies, these
pets,

No tenderer name is their due;

A glutton for glory, none lets,

—Crack-pates and slash-bellies,
these pets,—

Till with blood and with battle he
sweats

Wherever there's fighting to do.

—Crack-pates and slash-bellies,
these pets,

No tenderer name is their due!

These are Gascony's darling cadets
Of Carbon of Castel-Jaloux.
All rivals their dominance rue,
Such love their wild wooing begets.
Every husband must shake in his
shoe.

Sound the fife! Sound the drum!
Singing Cuckoo!

These are Gascony's darling cadets.
Of Carbon of Castel-Jaloux!

GUICHE. [*coolly, seated in an armchair
which RAGUENEAU has hastened
to fetch.*] A poet is the fashion,
I infer.

Will you be mine?

CYRANO. I will be no man's, sir.

GUICHE. My uncle, Richelieu, who
went abroad

Last night, was entertained. 'Tis
he . . .

LE BRET. [*dazzled.*] Good Lord!

GUICHE. You've rhymed at least five
acts? I will engage?

LE BRET. [*whispering.*] You'll see your
Agrippina on the stage!

GUICHE. Bring them to him . . .

CYRANO. [*tempted, a little charmed.*]
Truly . . .

GUICHE. He is most learned.
Your lines will be corrected, newly
turned . . .

CYRANO. [*whose face changes in-
stantly.*] Impossible, my lord.
My blood is frozen.

To think of one least comma newly
chosen.

GUICHE. But if a poem please him,
you shall hear

How well he pays.

CYRANO. Nay, he would pay less dear
Than I. When I have made a verse
I find well made,

I sing it to myself and am repaid.

GUICHE. Sir, you are proud.

CYRANO. Sir, you are not mistaken.

A CADET. [*coming in with his sword
strung with hats, with plumes be-
draggled, battered and broken.*]

See, Cyrano, the bag of game we've
taken,

Down by the wharf. The fox es-
caped the toils

But left his brush.

CARBON. So, to the victor, spoils.

EVERYBODY. [*laughing.*] Ah, ha-ha!

CUIGY. The man who hired that rab-
ble, made that plan,

Must rage to-day.

BRIS. Is't known?

GUICHE. I am the man.

[*The laughter ceases.*]

I charged them to chastise,—one
must forego it,

Though tempted, for oneself—a
drunken poet.

[*An embarrassed silence.*]

THE CADET. [*whispering to CYRANO,
showing him the hats.*] Shall we
try out the lard,—or—it de-
pends . . .

A hare-stew? . . .

CYRANO. [*taking the sword upon which
the hats are impaled, and with
a flourish and a salute letting
them slide off at the feet of the
COUNT OF GUICHE.*] Pray, re-
turn them to your friends.

GUICHE. [*rising and calling angrily.*]
My porter and my chair, at once. I
wish

To ride. [*To CYRANO, violently.*]

You, sir . . .

A VOICE. [*in the street, calling.*] Chair
for my lord, the Count of
Guiche.

GUICHE. [*who has mastered himself,
smiling.*] Have you read *Don
Quixote*?

CYRANO. I make that claim,
And stand uncovered at the mad
knight's name.

GUICHE. Then meditate upon . . .

A PORTER. [*at the door.*] Your chair . . .

GUICHE. The scene
That tells of wind-mills, sir.

CYRANO. Chapter thirteen.

GUICHE. When one attacks them, one
may always find . . .

CYRANO. One has a foe that veers with
every wind?

GUICHE. That wind-mills have long
arms and may make scars,
Thrusting you to the mire.

CYRANO. Or to the stars!
[*The COUNT OF GUICHE goes
out. He is seen mounting his
chair. The gentlemen go out.*]

whispering. LE BRET escorts them. The crowd melts away.]

SCENE VIII.

[CYRANO, LE BRET, the CADETS who have taken places at the tables on both side of the room and are ordering food and wine.]

CYRANO. [*mockingly saluting those who go out without daring to look toward him.*] Gentlemen . . . Gentlemen . . .

LE BRET. [*desolated, coming back to CYRANO, his arms uplifted to heaven.*] So richly clad . . .

CYRANO. Ah, thou. Thou'rt going to scold.

LE BRET. . . . It is so mad! Some men woo Fortune,—you assassinate.

Exaggeration!

CYRANO. I exaggerate.

LE BRET. [*triumphantly.*] Ah!

CYRANO. On principle. And for a good example,

I find exaggeration none too ample.

LE BRET. Ah, leave this pose of musketeer, my friend.

Fortune and glory woo thee.

CYRANO. . . . To what end? —Find a great patron? Fawn on noble folk?

Cling, as the ivy twines about the oak,

And feeding on its bark, creeps up at length?

To crawl by cunning, not to rise by strength?

I thank you, no! Inscribe, as rhymesters do

Verses to financiers? Crack jokes to woo

To lips of ministers a passing smile,—Half fearing it is sinister, the while?

I thank you, no! To eat toad every day?

Crawl on your belly till it's thin? And pray,

Shall one's skin first grow dirty at the knees?

One's back grow hooped, bending with fatal ease?

I thank you, no! Sit always on the fence,

Lest this or that side give the great offense?

Howl always with the pack? Still live afraid

Swinging your censer always in some beard?

I thank you, no! Tread spindles in a coop?

Become a big man in a little group? Paddle in ponds,—the oar a madrigal, And spinsters' sighs to swell the sails withal?

I thank you, no! To the good Sercy go

And pay him if he publish? Thank you, no!

To be named pope by that convention's will

Whose every bishop is an imbecile? I thank you, no!

—Strive still that none outrank you, Not striving to perfect your work?

I thank you, No! Discover talent only where it lacks?

Be terrorized by pamphleteer attacks?

To have ambition, thus,—“If only I Can hope for mention in the *Mercury*”?

I thank you, no! Seek still to serve the time,

And make a visit rather than a rhyme?

To frame petitions asking—anything?

I thank you, no! I thank you, no!

But, . . . sing,

Dream, laugh, and wander—be alone and free.

—A voice that vibrates; eyes that clearly see,—

To set your hat awry if so you'd don it;

For yes, or no, to fight,—or make a sonnet!

Careless of fame to do one's work, and soon

To make that long-dreamed journey to the moon!

Only to write what in your heart began.

Modest, to tell yourself, "My little man

Be satisfied with fruit, flowers, leaves or stem,

If in your garden,—yours,—you gather them."

Then if, perchance, a little triumph come,

There is no tribute to be paid at Rome.

Wrought in your soul let all your merit be.

Be not the ivy. Be yourself, the tree.

What though no oak, no linden, there is grown,

To rise,—not high, perhaps,—but rise alone!

LE BRET. Alone, but not against all. Why the devil

Have you this mania just to seem uncivil?

Make always enemies, without an end?

CYRANO. I see you make so many friends, my friend!

I treat more freely where salutes are fewer,

And a new foeman makes me feel secure.

LE BRET. What folly!

CYRANO. 'Tis my weakness. I have stated

I please to displease; love to be well hated.

One walks so freely, in such cheerful guise,

Under a fusillade of angry eyes.

I like my doublet doubly to adorn

With angry glances and with upstart's scorn.

You with your friends remind me past belief

Of one enswathed in a soft neckerchief,

Rich with Italian lace. One's head must be

At ease therein,—but held less loftily.

The brow that's not compelled and lifted high,

May lean too low; the neck may bend, awry.

For me, my Hate makes, many a time and oft,

A full starched ruff that holds my head aloft;

New enemies make fresh frills every day,

A new discomfort and an added ray,

Till, a great Spanish ruff, one sees the whole,

A band of iron,—but an aureole!

LE BRET. [*after a pause, putting his arm through his friend's arm.*]

Be proud and fierce to others. 'Twill not move me.

To me, say simply this: "She does not love me."

CYRANO. [*sharply.*] Be still!
[*A moment before, CHRISTIAN has entered. He mingles with the CADETS. None of them speak a word to him. At last he sits down alone at a little table, and LISE serves him.*]

SCENE IX.

[CYRANO, LE BRET, the CADETS, CHRISTIAN OF NEUVILLETTE.]

A CADET. [*seated at a table, center, back, glass in hand.*] Hol! Cyrano!

[CYRANO turns.] Your story.

CYRANO. In good time.

[*He goes up, arm-in-arm with LE BRET. They talk in low tones.*]

THE CADET. [*rising and coming down.*]

'Twill be a lesson useful as sublimed . . .

A lesson [*he stops near the table at which CHRISTIAN is seated*] an apprentice best learn quickly.

CHRIS. [*raising his head.*] Apprentice?

ANOTHER. Sickly Northerner . . .

CHRIS. Eh? Sickly?

1ST CADET. [*jeeringly.*] My lord of Neuvillelette, you shall be coached.

One subject in our ranks is never broached.

In his home who was hung let none say, "Rope."

CHRIS. What mean you?

ANOTHER CADET. [*in a menacing voice, laying his finger mysteriously aside of his nose.*] Look. [*he repeats the gesture thrice.*] You understand, I hope.

CHRIS. Oh . . . it's . . .

ANOTHER. 'Pst! . . . The word is never spoken.

[*He points to CYRANO, who is in conversation with LE BRET.*] Else, someone's sword and head alike were broken.

ANOTHER. [*who, while CHRISTIAN talked to the others, has slipped up behind him in his place at the table.*] Two men who whined were killed as dead as Moses,

—They made him angry, talking through their noses.

ANOTHER. [*in a sepulchral voice, appearing from under the table, where he has crawled on all fours.*] None makes, who lives to see a ripe old age,

The least allusion to that cartilage.

ANOTHER. [*putting his hand on CHRISTIAN'S shoulder.*] A word . . . nay, but a gesture. 'Tis avowed

A handkerchief drawn out may prove a shroud.

[*Silence. All with folded arms sit in a circle around him, staring and saying nothing. He rises and goes to CARBON OF CASTEL-JALOUX, who, talking to a fellow officer, appears to have noticed none of this.*]

CHRIS. Captain . . .

CARBON. [*turning and surveying him from head to heels.*] Sir?

CHRIS. What's done, sir, if one find Some Southerners too boastful?

CARBON. If inclined, One proves the North may have its share of glory.

[*He turns his back.*]

CHRIS. I thank you.

1ST CADET. [*to CYRANO.*] Thy story, now.

ALL. His story!

CYRANO. [*coming down.*] Ah, my story?

[*All bring their stools and group themselves around him. CHRISTIAN sits astride a chair.*]

Ah, well, I marched alone to the Nesle hatch.

The moon above shone like a silvern watch,

—When some celestial watch-maker, with care,

Wrapped it in fleecy cloths, and left me there,

Its silver case thus wholly hid from sight.

In the black darkness of a moonless night.

The wharves unlighted stood in pitchy rows.

'Sdeath, one couldn't see beyond . . .

CHRIS. His nose.

[*Silence. Every one gets up slowly. They look at CYRANO, aghast. He has stopped, transfixed. A pause.*]

CYRANO. Who is that fellow?

A CADET. [*in a choking whisper.*] He is one who came

This morning.

CYRANO. [*taking a step toward CHRISTIAN.*] This morning?

1ST CADET. [*to CYRANO.*] Thy story, now.

Is Baron of Neuville . . .

CYRANO. [*suddenly restraining himself.*] Ah, very well . . .

[*He turns pale, then red, starts to hurl himself upon CHRISTIAN, then masters himself, and in a toneless voice.*]

I mean . . .

[*He takes up his story.*] As I was saying . . .

[*In a suddenly fierce voice.*] 'Sdeath! . . .

[*Then in an ordinary voice.*] Nothing could be seen.

[*Stupefaction. They all sit down, furtively looking at one another.*] I marched on, thinking, "For a worthless wight I have offended some great prince or knight

Who will surely have me . . .

CHRIS. By the nose.

[*Everybody starts up:* CHRISTIAN balances himself on his chair.]

CYRANO. [*in a strangled voice.*] Between his teeth, . . .

Have me between his teeth . . . that so, beneath

That clouded moon, I'd thrust . . .

CHRIS. Your nose.

CYRANO. My fingers . . . 'twixt the bark and tree.

That great one well may crush a man like me . . .

At least might pinch . . .

CHRIS. Your nose.

CYRANO. [*wiping the sweat from his forehead.*] My prying fingers.

But added, "Forward! For no Gascon lingers

When duty calls. Forward Cyrano goes!"

When from the shadow someone . . .

CHRIS. Punched your nose.

CYRANO. I parried,—found myself set . . .

CHRIS. Nose to nose . . .

CYRANO. [*making a bound toward him.*] 'Odsbody!

[*All the Gascons crowd forward to see. At CHRISTIAN'S side, CYRANO checks himself, and takes up his story.*]

. . . On by five score drunken foes,

Who stank . . .

CHRIS. A noseful.

CYRANO. [*white and smiling.*] Garlic and litharge.

I hurled myself . . .

CHRIS. Nose to the wind.

CYRANO. I charge!

I ripped two open,—put a third to rout;

One lunged. I parried. Paf . . .

CHRIS. Pif! on the snout.

CYRANO. [*leaping up.*] Now, thunder! Clear the room.

[*All the CADETS rush pell-mell for the doors.*]

1ST CADET. The tiger wakes!

2ND CADET. We'll find mincemeat.

RAGUE. Huh?

ANOTHER CADET. For your smallest pie.

RAGUE. I'm white and crumpled as a napkin,—aye,

And not as starchy.

CARBON. Everybody come.

ANOTHER. He isn't going to leave the smallest crumb.

ANOTHER. I'll die of fright. Hey! Help! Somebody brace me!

ANOTHER. [*closing the door on the right.*] There'll be a scene of horror.

[*They all go out, by the door at the back or the one on the right. Some have disappeared by the stairway. CYRANO and CHRISTIAN stand face to face and look at each other for a moment.*]

SCENE X.

[CYRANO, CHRISTIAN.]

CYRANO. My boy, embrace me.

CHRIS. Sir . . .

CYRANO. Brave.

CHRIS. Ah, that! But . . .

CYRANO. Brave beyond another.

CHRIS. You speak thus?

CYRANO. Boy, embrace me. I am her brother.

CHRIS. Whose?

CYRANO. But . . . hers!

CHRIS. Hers?

CYRANO. Roxane's.

CHRIS. [*running to him.*] In Heaven name!

Her brother?

CYRANO. Fraternal cousin,—just the same.

CHRIS. She told you . . . ?

CYRANO. All.

CHRIS. She loves me?

CYRANO. As I show you.

CHRIS. [*seizing his hand.*] O, Sir . . .

O, Sir . . . I'm very glad to know you!

CYRANO. A sudden sentiment.

CHRIS. Sir, . . . I am full Of shame.

CYRANO. [*looking at him and putting his hand on his shoulder.*] 'Tis true. The rascal's beautiful.

CHRIS. Sir, I admire you, oh, so much . . . Good luck!

CYRANO. But all those noses?

CHRIS. Oh, I take them back!

CYRANO. Roxane awaits a letter.

CHRIS. Lackaday!

CYRANO. How now?

CHRIS. I am undone if I must frame my vow.

I am such a dullard that I die of shame.

CYRANO. Thou didst attack me with right good acclaim.

He was no fool that made that sharp attack.

CHRIS. Bah! When a man can fight, words do not lack.

With men and soldiers, facile words may come.

With ladies I am ever dull and dumb.

Oh, when I pass their eyes are always kind . . .

CYRANO. And if you tarry, gentler hearts you find?

CHRIS. Nay, for I am of those,—I know and grieve,—
Who cannot speak of love.

CYRANO. Faith, I believe
If heavenly powers had modelled me more fit,
I am of those who well could speak of it.

CHRIS. Oh, to be one whose words have wit and grace!

CYRANO. To win soft glances for a comely face!

CHRIS. Roxane is Euphuistic, wise and fine.

She will be disillusioned.

CYRANO. Were it mine
On such a subject freely to expend it . . .

CHRIS. I lack but eloquence.

CYRANO. [*abruptly.*] And I will lend it!
Thou wilt supply the beauty: by this chance,
We'll make, we two, a hero of romance!

CHRIS. What?

CYRANO. Canst thou learn by heart in verse or prose

What every day I'll teach?

CHRIS. Dost thou propose . . .

CYRANO. That nothing ever disappoint Roxane!

Consent that we together try this plan.

Wilt thou feel pass from my buff doublet's fold
To thy gay doublet all my heart may hold?

CHRIS. But Cyrano . . .

CYRANO. Choose, Christian!

CHRIS. Oh, I fear!

CYRANO. Thou fearest, left alone, to chill thy dear.

Wilt thou,—Ah, soon to win her sweet embraces,—
That we collaborate,—thy lips, my phrases?

CHRIS. Thine eyes burn . . .

CYRANO. Wilt thou?

CHRIS. Can a man refuse thee?
'Twould give thee pleasure?

CYRANO. [*fervently.*] It . . . would . . .
[*recalling himself and speaking as an artist*] would amuse me!

'Tis an experiment in artistry.

Wilt thou complete me,—I fulfilling thee?

Thou'lt walk and in the shadow I will press:

I'll be thy wit, and thou, my comeliness.

CHRIS. But, oh, the letter! Would she find it better,
Fair spoken words, ill-written?

CYRANO. [*taking from his doublet the letter he has written.*]
Here's thy letter.

CHRIS. What's this?

CYRANO. It only waits to be addressed.

CHRIS. I . . .

CYRANO. Send it. Send it. Put thy mind at rest.

'Tis a good letter.

CHRIS. You have had? . . .

CYRANO. We have—no poet waits
Till Chloris comes—in pouches and in pates,
Love letters. Poets' sweethearts are but gleams.

We blow soap bubbles for a maid o' dreams.

Take it, and change my dream to verity.

Tossed at a venture, idle vows and free,

Thou'lt find a nest for all these errant birds.

Thou'lt see,—nay, take the letter,—all my words

—Take it,—are eloquent, as insincere.

Take it and let's ha' done!

CHRIS. But to appear
'Twas writ for her . . . some changes
might improve . . .

Will it fit Roxane?

CYRANO. 'Twill fit her like a glove!

CHRIS. But . . .

CYRANO. Self-love is credulous. Make
no demur.

Roxane will think the letter writ for her.

CHRIS. [*throwing himself into CYRANO'S arms.*] Ah, my friend!
[*They embrace.*]

SCENE XI.

[CYRANO, CHRISTIAN, *The Gascons*, the TROOPER, LISE.]

A CADET. [*opening the door a crack.*]
No sound. All still as death. The
latch I'll clutch . . .

I dare not look. [*He pokes his head in.*] Hein?

ALL THE CADETS. [*entering and seeing CYRANO and CHRISTIAN locked in an embrace.*] Ah! . . . Oh
. . . Oh!

A CADET. This is too much.

THE TROOPER. Ah-ah!

CARBON. Our demon meek as any
saint-apostle?

Smite him on one, he turns the other
nostril?

THE TROOPER. Now one can talk about
his nose, surmising

His spirit broken?

[*Calling to LISE, with a swaggering air.*] Watch me!

[*He sniffs the air, affectedly.*] How
surprising . . .

This smell of spice.

[*He goes up to CYRANO.*] You smelt
it, sir, you said—

This spicy smell? What is it?

CYRANO. [*buffeting him.*] It's clove
head!

[*Joy. The CADETS have found
the lost CYRANO. They turn
handsprings.*]

[*Curtain.*]

ACT III

ROXANE'S KISS

A little square in the old Marais.
Old houses; a glimpse of narrow streets.
Right, ROXANE'S home and the wall of
her garden, tall shrubbery reaching
above it. Above the door, a balcony
and a window. Beside the door, a
bench.

Ivy clings to the walls; jessamine
engarlands the balcony and cascades
from its railing.

With the aid of the bench and the
jutting stones of the wall, one can
easily climb to the balcony.

Opposite, an old house of the same
style, brick and stone, with a massive
entrance door. The knocker is swathed
in linen, like a sore thumb.

When the curtain rises, the DUENNA
is discovered, sitting on the bench.
Above, the window on ROXANE'S bal-
cony is open. Near the DUENNA stands
RAGUENEAU, dressed in livery of a sort.
He is finishing a story, wiping his eyes
the while.

SCENE I.

[RAGUENEAU, the DUENNA; later
ROXANE, CYRANO, and two
Pages.]

RAGUE. She left me,—for a trooper.
Life was worth

Nothing. I hung myself. I quit the
earth.

My lord Cyrano found me so . . .
dependent,
And got this place for me as super-
intendent
To his fair cousin.

THE DUENNA. But what wrought this
ruin?

RAGUE. Soldiers and poets were the
shop's undoin'!

Mars ate some cakes; Apollo cleared
the plate;

You understand . . . there wasn't
long to wait!

THE DUENNA. [*rising and calling
toward the open window.*]

Ready, Roxane? They wait us!
Haste, I pray!

ROXANE'S VOICE. [*through the win-
dow.*] I don my cape.

THE DUENNA. [*to RAGUENEAU, indi-
cating the door across the
street.*] In Clomire's chaste re-
treat, across the way.

We pore upon the Realm of Tender-
ness.

RAGUE. The Realm of Tender . . .

THE DUENNA. Of Pure Passion, yes.
[*Calling once more.*]

Roxane, make haste! To dally in
this fashion

May cost the Discourse on the
Tender Passion.

VOICE OF ROXANE. Coming!

[*One hears the strum-
ming of stringed instru-
ments drawing near.*]

VOICE OF CYRANO. [*singing, in the
wings.*] La, la, la, la!

THE DUENNA. [*surprised.*] They're
singing for our favour.

CYRANO. [*followed by two Pages who
carry archlutes.*] You three-fold
fool, 'tis demi-semi-quaver!

1ST PAGE. [*sarcastically.*] You know
then, sir, the quavers and the
scruples?

CYRANO. Music I know, like all Gas-
sendi's pupils.

THE PAGE. [*playing and singing.*] La,
la!

CYRANO. [*snatching the lute and tak-
ing up the measure.*] Enough.

'Tis I who will repeat.

La, la, la, la!

ROXANE. [*appearing on the balcony.*]
You?

CYRANO. [*singing to the air already be-
gun.*] I, who come to greet

Your lilies and to bow before your
ro . . . ses!

ROXANE. I'm coming down.

[*She leaves the balcony.*]

THE DUENNA. Who are these virtuosos?

CYRANO. They are a wager won from
Assoucy.

—A point of grammar. "I'll en-
gage," quoth he,—

Suddenly pointing to these lanky
brutes,

Who twang by trade their torture-
proof archlutes,

His escort always,—“one whole day
of song.”

He lost. So at my heels these two
belong

Till Phœbus takes anew his golden
round.

Charming at first, it palls, as I have
found.

[*To the Musicians.*] Hep! Go and
play for me a grave pavane

For Montfleury.

[*To the DUENNA.*] I come to ask
Roxane,

As every evening, . . .

[*To the Pages, as they go out.*]

Long . . . and off the key!

[*To the DUENNA.*] If her beloved is
all she'd have him be?

ROXANE. [*coming out of the house.*]
Beautiful, gifted,—Oh, how I adore
him!

CYRANO. [*smiling.*] Gifted . . . and
wise? . . .

ROXANE. Even you come not before
him!

CYRANO. Oh, I admit . . .

ROXANE. No tongue so skilled to bring
The pretty nothings that are every-
thing.

Sometimes he hesitates, his muse has
flown,

Then lovely phrases for the lapse
atone.

CYRANO. [*incredulous.*] No!

ROXANE. You men are all alike! He
must be dull,

So you all say, being so beautiful!

CYRANO. In facile fashion then the rascal prates?

ROXANE. Prates, quotha? Talks? My cousin, he orates!

CYRANO. He writes?

ROXANE. Ever better. Hear this line:
[*Declaiming.*] "The more thou takest my heart, the more 'tis mine."

[*Triumphantly, to CYRANO.*] Ah, well? . . .

CYRANO. Pshaw!

ROXANE. This one: "Since I must have a heart to yearn for thee, And thou hast mine, give thou thine own to me."

CYRANO. Always too much, or not enough. 'Tis curious.

Just what lacks he, in hearts?

ROXANE. You make me furious! 'Tis jealousy.

CYRANO. [*trembling.*] Hein?

ROXANE. Author's jealousy. This one:—Could anything more perfect be?—

"My heart before you is one longing cry.

Ah, since my kisses in my letters lie, Read, Lady, with thy lips thy lover's letters."

CYRANO. [*smiling with satisfaction in spite of himself.*] Aha, those lines . . .

[*Recollecting, disdainfully.*] Alliterative fetters!

ROXANE. And this . . .

CYRANO. [*entranced.*] You know these missives, then, by heart?

ROXANE. All.

CYRANO. I am dumb. You flatter well his art.

ROXANE. He is a master.

CYRANO. [*modestly.*] Oh, a . . .

ROXANE. [*peremptorily.*] A master.

CYRANO. So be it,—master.

THE DUENNA. [*who has gone back, coming forward hurriedly.*] The Count of Guiche!

[*To CYRANO, pushing him toward the house.*] Go inside.

Oh, go faster.

He must not find you here. 'Twould be a clew . . .

He would guess . . .

ROXANE. . . . My secret, now so safe with you.

He loves me! He has power! He must not know!

He might destroy my hopes with one fierce blow!

CYRANO. [*going into the house.*] Well, well, well!

[*The COUNT OF GUICHE appears.*]

SCENE II.

[*ROXANE, the COUNT OF GUICHE; at a little distance, the DUENNA.*]

ROXANE. [*to the COUNT OF GUICHE, making a reverence.*] I am going out.

GUICHE. I come to say good-bye.

ROXANE. You go away?

GUICHE. To war.

ROXANE. Ah!

GUICHE. This night.

ROXANE. Ah!

GUICHE. I

Have orders. Siege of Arras.

ROXANE. Is it so?

GUICHE. Aye, and this parting leaves you cold as snow.

ROXANE. Oh, . . .

GUICHE. And me, heart-broken. When shall we two meet?

I am made commander.

ROXANE. [*indifferent.*] Bravo!

GUICHE. I repeat, Commander of the Guards.

ROXANE. [*arrested.*] The Guards?

GUICHE. Where serves Your braggart cousin who so well deserves

The vengeance I shall know how to take.

ROXANE. [*suffocating.*] You meant The Guards would go?

GUICHE. [*laughing.*] One takes one's regiment.

ROXANE. [*sinking down on the bench; aside.*] Christian!

GUICHE. What troubles you?

ROXANE. [*shaken.*] To go . . . so far! To . . . care . . . and have the dear one go to war!

GUICHE. [*surprised and charmed.*]
For the first time you whisper words
so kind,—

—And I must leave you!

ROXANE. [*her tone changes, she toys
with her fan.*]

You . . . you have in mind

Revenge . . . ?

GUICHE. [*smiling.*] You take your
cousin's part?

ROXANE. Nay, I oppose.

GUICHE. You see him?

ROXANE. Rarely.

GUICHE. Everywhere one goes,
One sees him with

[*He tries to recall the name.*]

This Neuville . . . villain . . .

ROXANE. Tall?

GUICHE. Blonde.

ROXANE. Red . . .

GUICHE. Handsome . . .

ROXANE. Tut!

GUICHE. But dull.

ROXANE. That's plain . . .
[*Changing her tone.*]

Your vengeance 'gainst Cyrano. You
had thought

To set him in the forefront? That
were naught,

He who loves fighting. Find a fitter
plan.

GUICHE. How?

ROXANE. Take the Regiment, and
leave this man

With his cadets, throughout the live-
long war,

Arms folded, here in Paris. Better
far,

Because more subtle, crueller, and
stranger,

To punish him, deprive him, Sir, of
danger!

GUICHE. Oh, woman, woman! Cruel,
aye, and droll.

A woman's trick.

ROXANE. He would eat out his soul.
His friends would gnaw their fingers.

Yes, and you

Would be avenged!

GUICHE. [*drawing closer.*] You care,
then? Is it true?

You espouse my cause. Roxane, I
wish to prove

It is for love . . .

ROXANE. It is . . . it is . . . for love.

GUICHE. [*showing some sealed papers.*]

I have the orders here, to be trans-
mitted

Without delay. But one shall be
omitted.

[*He detaches one.*] This . . . this
of the Cadets.

[*He puts it in his pocket.*] I'll keep
it safe.

Ah, how the boaster, Cyrano, will
chafe!

You play such pranks, even you?

ROXANE. Sometimes one falls,
Being tempted!

GUICHE. I am mad! My duty
calls,

But—go when you are yielding?—
Listen well . . .

Hard by, the good Capuchin brothers
dwell;

Fra Athanasius is the Abbot. There,
No layman is admitted. Yet I'll
swear

They'll find a way to hide me in
their sleeves.

They have not quite forgotten, one
believes,

One is nephew of one's uncle at the
least,—

And Richelieu's shadow may affright
a priest.

They'll think me 'gone. Masked, I
will come. Ah, pray,

Lady Caprice, let me but wait one
day!

ROXANE. If it leaked out! . . . Your
glory . . .

GUICHE. Pah!

ROXANE. Your vow!

The siege!

GUICHE. Forgot! Pray you . . .

ROXANE. No, no!

GUICHE. Pray . . . thou!

ROXANE. [*tenderly.*] I must forbid!

GUICHE. Ah!

ROXANE. Go!

[*Aside.*] And Christian stays with
me.

[*Aloud.*] I bid you be my hero . . .
Anthony!

GUICHE. Celestial sound! Then you
love him . . .

ROXANE. For whom I fear!

GUICHE. [*transported, kisses her hand.*]
I go! . . .

Are you content?

ROXANE. Oh, yes . . . my dear!
[*He goes out.*]

THE DUENNA. [*curtseying derisively, behind his back.*] Oh, yes, my dear!

ROXANE. [*to the DUENNA.*] 'Sh! Not a word. He would owe me much despite.

I have robbed Cyrano of a chance to fight.

[*She calls toward the house.*] Cousin!

SCENE III.

[ROXANE, the DUENNA, CYRANO.]

ROXANE. They wait us 'at Clomire's.
We must not linger.

Alcandre speaks and . . .

THE DUENNA. [*putting her finger in her ear.*] And my little finger
Says we will miss it.

CYRANO. Do not miss those . . . apes.

THE DUENNA. [*entranced.*] Behold,
the knocker, which fair linen
drapes. [*to the knocker.*]

One sees you shrouded lest your
careless clamor

Trouble sweet discourse with its
brazen hammer.

[*She lifts it with infinite precaution and knocks softly.*]

ROXANE. [*seeing the door is opened.*]
Let us go in.

[*On the threshold, to CYRANO.*] If
Christian come, of course

I know that he will wait.

CYRANO. [*hurriedly, as she is disappearing.*] Ah . . . [*she turns.*]
His discourse.

As is your wont, you'll question
him . . . ?

ROXANE. About . . .

CYRANO. [*eagerly.*] About? . . .

ROXANE. Cyrano, you'll be dumb?

CYRANO. How can you doubt?

ROXANE. Then . . . about nothing.
"Take free rein," I'll cry.

"Improvise! Speak of love! Be
splendid! Fly!"

CYRANO. [*smiling.*] Good.

ROXANE. 'Sh!

CYRANO. Whist!

ROXANE. Not a word.

[*She enters, and the door is closed.*]

CYRANO. [*bowing low, as soon as the door is safely shut.*] Thank you.

[*The door opens, and ROXANE puts her head out.*]

ROXANE. Be dumb,

Lest he prepare!

CYRANO. The devil! Never!

THE TWO. [*speaking at once.*] 'Sh!
[*The door is shut.*]

CYRANO. [*calling softly.*] Ho, Christian! Come!

SCENE IV.

[CYRANO, CHRISTIAN.]

CYRANO. Prepare thy memory to grave
the story.

This is the night to win immortal
glory.

Don't look so glum. I know the
theme. Let's go,—

Quick! to thy quarters. Let me teach
thee.

CHRIS. No!

CYRANO. Hein?

CHRIS. Here I'll wait Roxane.

CYRANO. What's this dismay?
What madness? Come, prepare!

CHRIS. I won't, I say!
I'm tired of borrowing every word
and thought,

Playing a rôle and fearing to be
caught.

'Twas well at first. I know she loves
me now.

I fear no more. I'll be myself, I vow.

CYRANO. Ah—well—now!

CHRIS. Who said I could not speak?
Thou'lt see, my friend, my wit is not
so weak.

Thy lessons helped. Now, I know
how to tell

My story. . . . And by all the devils
of hell,

The way to take her in my arms I
know.

[*Seeing ROXANE, who comes out of CLOMIRE'S house.*]

She's coming! Oh, don't leave me,
Cyrano!

CYRANO. [*bowing low.*] Speak for yourself, Sir.

[*He disappears behind the garden wall.*]

SCENE V.

[CHRISTIAN, ROXANE; for a moment, the DUENNA.]

ROXANE. [*coming out of CLOMIRE'S house with a fashionable group; there are leave-takings, curtseys, farewells.*]

Barthénio! Gremione!

THE DUENNA. [*disconsolate.*] We missed the Discourse. Ah, I might have known!

ROXANE. [*still saluting the EUPHUISTS.*] Urimedonte. Farewell.

[*All, bowing to ROXANE, curtseying, saluting one another, go off by different streets. ROXANE sees CHRISTIAN.*]

ROXANE. You came!

[*She goes toward him.*] The night is sweet.

Wait. . . . They have gone. . . .
No footfall in the street. . . .

Let us sit here. Speak. I will hear . . . and dream.

CHRIS. [*sits down near her on the bench; a silence, then:*]

I love you.

ROXANE. [*closing her eyes.*] Speak of love.

CHRIS. I love thee.

ROXANE. 'Tis the theme.
Gild it!

CHRIS. I . . .

ROXANE. Broider it!

CHRIS. I love thee so.

ROXANE. Doubtless. And then . . .

CHRIS. And then I want to know
If you love me. Tell me, Roxane.

ROXANE. [*pouting.*] You seem
To give me gruel when I hoped for
cream.

Tell me a little *how* you love me.

CHRIS. Much.

ROXANE. Elaborate your love!

CHRIS. I want to touch . . .
To kiss . . . thy neck.

ROXANE. Christian!

CHRIS. I love . . .

ROXANE. [*trying to rise.*] Once more!

CHRIS. [*eagerly, restraining her.*] Nay,
I don't love . . .

ROXANE. [*sitting down again.*] That is
better.

CHRIS. I adore!

ROXANE. [*rising and moving away.*]
Oh!

CHRIS. I grow dull.

ROXANE. And win my just disdain.
'Twould please me hardly less had
you grown plain.

CHRIS. But . . .

ROXANE. [*severely.*] Rally the eloquence so put to flight.

CHRIS. I . . .

ROXANE. I know, you love me. Go!
[*She goes toward the house.*]

CHRIS. Don't quit my sight!
I want to say . . .

ROXANE. [*her hand upon the latch.*]
That you adore me? Yes.
Leave me!

CHRIS. But I . . .

[*She goes in and shuts the door in his face.*]

CYRANO. [*who has come back and stands for a moment unseen.*]
A most pronounced success.

SCENE VI.

[CYRANO, CHRISTIAN; a moment, The Pages.]

CHRIS. Succor me!

CYRANO. No.

CHRIS. I die, 'less I reclaim
Her favour, instantly.

CYRANO. 'T' the devil's name,
How shall I teach you, instantly?

CHRIS. [*seizing his arm.*] Look,
Cyrano!

[*A light shines out from ROXANE'S chamber.*]

CYRANO. [*moved.*] Her window!

CHRIS. I shall die.

CYRANO. You fool, speak low.

CHRIS. [*whispering.*] Shall die!

CYRANO. The night is dark.

CHRIS. Well, what?

CYRANO. 'Tis not too late.
Stand there, you ass, though you de-
serve your fate,
There, by the balcony. I'll hide be-
neath,
And whisper thee thy words.

CHRIS. But . . .

CYRANO. Save thy breath!

THE PAGES. [*reappearing, present themselves to CYRANO.*] Hep!

CYRANO. Whist!

[*He signs to them to speak softly.*]

1ST PAGE. [*whispering.*] My lord, we
gave the serenade

To Montfleury.

CYRANO. [*hurriedly and low.*] Now,
lie in ambushcade,

One at this corner; one on t'other
stay;

And if a stroller chance to pass this
way,

Play me an air.

2ND PAGE. What air, Sir Gassendist?

CYRANO. Sad, for a man; gay, for a
lady.

[*The Pages vanish, each tak-
ing his station at the corner
of the street.*]

CYRANO. [*to CHRISTIAN.*]

Whist!

Call her.

CHRIS. Roxane!

CYRANO. [*gathering a handful of peb-
bles which he tosses against the
window.*] Wait. These are what
we need.

ROXANE. [*half opening her window.*]
Who called me?

CHRIS. I.

ROXANE. Who is I?

CHRIS. Christian.

ROXANE. [*disdainfully.*] Indeed?

CHRIS. I must speak to you.

CYRANO. [*under the balcony, to CHRIS-
TIAN.*] Whisper, man. Speak low.

ROXANE. Nay, you speak stupidly. I
bid you go.

CHRIS. Pray hear . . .

ROXANE. You love no more.

CHRIS. [*to whom CYRANO whispers the
words.*] No more,—just heaven!

I who love always more!

ROXANE. [*who, going to close the win-
dow, pauses.*]

He is half forgiven.

CHRIS. [*still repeating the words with
which CYRANO supplies him.*]

Love sways my soul. Always new
tremors start.

The imp has made a cradle of my
heart.

ROXANE. [*coming out on the balcony.*]

Since Love is cruel, you, if you are
wise,

Will kill him in this cradle where he
lies.

CHRIS. [*same business.*] Nay, I have
striven, but Lady, an' it please,

This new-born infant is a Hercules.

ROXANE. That's better.

CHRIS. [*same business.*] With ease he
strangles,—it is truth I tell,—

The serpents, Pride and Doubt.

ROXANE. Nay, this is well.

[*She leans on the balcony railing.*]

Why do you hesitate? Begin, and
stop?

Your spring of fancy trickles, drop
by drop.

CYRANO. [*drawing CHRISTIAN under the
balcony and slipping into his
place.*] 'Sh! This becomes too
hard. . . .

ROXANE. What is your plight?

Your words come slowly. Why?

CYRANO. [*speaking in a whisper, as
CHRISTIAN has done.*]

Because 'tis night.

Groping in shadow, they must seek
your ear.

ROXANE. Mine do not stumble, yet
you seem to hear.

CYRANO. They find their place at once,
because they rest,

Where I receive them always, in my
breast.

My heart is large. Your ear is very
small.

Beside, your words descend. They
quickly fall,—

But mine must mount, my Lady.
That is slow.

ROXANE. They climbed not half so
well, a while ago.

CYRANO. In these gymnastics, they
have gained some skill.

ROXANE. My voice falls from a height.

CYRANO. A height to kill
A listening lover if, thus set apart,

You let a harsh word fall upon his heart.

ROXANE. [*moving.*] I am coming down.

CYRANO. [*earnestly.*] No.

ROXANE. [*showing the bench beneath the balcony.*] Climb on the settee, then.

CYRANO. [*starting back, trembling, in the darkness.*] No.

ROXANE. How . . . No?

CYRANO. [*more and more carried away by emotion.*] Oh, let me have it, —sweet beyond thy ken,—

This hour when I may speak the truth I ween,—

Pour out my pent-up love, unseen.

ROXANE. Unseen?

CYRANO. Yes. It is heaven. Dimly one divines.

You see my mantle but as shadowy lines.

I see your summer gown, a gleam of white.

I am a shadow. You are living light.

You know not what it means to me, this hour.

Have I been eloquent?

ROXANE. You had that dower!

CYRANO. My speech has never flowed, as now it flows

From my full heart.

ROXANE. Why?

CYRANO. Why? I must oppose My words against a peril.

ROXANE. What?

CYRANO. The dizziness Of those who look in your deep eyes.

I bless

This darkness whence I speak to you alone

For the first time!

ROXANE. And with a strange, new tone.

CYRANO. [*coming nearer, passionately.*]

A new tone? Yes. For in the dark delaying,

I dare to be myself.

[*He stops and with bewilderment.*]

What am I saying?

I do not know. Forgive! To speak to you

Is so delicious, and for me so new.

ROXANE. So new?

CYRANO. [*overwhelmed, trying to re-*

capture his words.] So new . . . but yes! To be sincere, Not fearing mockery,—that damned fear!

ROXANE. Mockery?

CYRANO. Yes, for my heart's leaping flame.

I clothed myself in robes of wit, for shame.

I reach, to touch the stars, but, 'neath the power

Of mockery, I stoop,—and pluck a flower!

ROXANE. Flowers in the grass, and flowers of speech, are sweet.

CYRANO. To-night, we will trample both beneath our feet.

Quivers and arrows, links, and such like toys

We'll toss them to the winds of fresher joys

Dull is the water—though the deed 'be nimble,—

Drunk, softly sipping, from a lady's thimble.

Ah, let the soul be free, speed on its course,

And quench its craving at the fountain's source!

ROXANE. Your intellect . . .

CYRANO. Found favour in your sight In the beginning. 'Twould affront this night,—

This hour, these perfumes, Nature's very self!—

To prate like pretty books from Voiture's shelf

—Ah, let the sky with its clear star-bright eyes

Shine in our hearts, rid them of all disguise.

I fear lest euphuistic alchemists

Let all true sentiment be lost in mists;

Lest in its crucible, the dross should shine,—

And fining, leave the fine less fine, in fine!

ROXANE. But intellect . . .

CYRANO. In love it is a crime! Fencing and parrying with things sublime!

The moment comes,—inevitably comes,—

Woe to the heart that never thus
succumbs!—

When in the soul a flame so pure
arises

That every well-turned phrase the
heart despises.

ROXANE. Ah, well, if that time come
to us, disclose

What words you would have for
me.

CYRANO. All those, all those, all those
That come to me, I'll toss them at
your feet,—

Not bind them in a nosegay! Oh, my
sweet,

I suffocate! I love thee, ah, so well!
Thy name at my heart's gate is like
a bell,

And all the time, Roxane, as that
heart beats,

That swaying bell; thy lovely name
repeats.

Dear, I remember all you do or say.
A year ago, one morn, the twelfth of
May,

You changed the way you dress your
shining hair.

Its blondness makes the day I see it
fair.

One who has faced the sun with fear-
less gaze

Sees everywhere the orb's vermilion
rays—

So, when I see thy hair, agleam and
curled,

A golden blur bedazzles all my
world!

ROXANE. [*in a troubled voice.*] Yes,
this is truly love.

CYRANO. Certes, this feeling,
Jealous and terrible and all-revealing
Is love. It has the sadness and the
might

Of love. Yet selfless. Self drops out
of sight.

For thy least good I would give all
my own;—

Aye, though thou knewst it not,—
content alone

If some day, from afar, I heard arise
Thy lovely laughter from my sacri-
fice.

Thy glances fire me holier heights to
win,

New valor, higher truths. Dost thou
begin

To comprehend my love? Ah, canst
thou mark

How my soul reaches . . . reaches
. . . through the dark?

Truly this evening is too fair, too
sweet!

I speak, you listen, and our spirits
meet.

It is too much. My hopes leapt not
so high,—

Not in my maddest moments. Let
me die!

My life is perfected! My spoken
word

Has made you tremble like a sway-
ing bird

Among the boughs,—a leaf among
the leaves.

For thou dost tremble! Lo, my
heart perceives

The trembling of thy white hand on
the vine.

The jasmine bears it. See, it reaches
mine!

[*He kisses passionately the
tips of one of the swaying
sprays of jasmine.*]

ROXANE. I tremble, yes, and weep,
and catch my breath,

And love thee, and am thine.

CYRANO. Then, come, sweet death!
This pure intoxication,—I wrought
this!

I ask but one thing more of life . . .

CHRIS. [*under the balcony.*] A kiss!

ROXANE. [*retreating.*] What?

CYRANO. Oh!

ROXANE. You ask . . .

CYRANO. Yes, I . . .

[*To CHRISTIAN.*] Thou goest too fast.

CHRIS. She is moved. I'll profit while
the mood shall last.

CYRANO. [*to ROXANE.*] Yes . . . I
. . . I . . . plead . . . because
you seem so gracious.

God knows, I know I have been too
audacious.

ROXANE. [*a little chilled.*] Then you
do not insist?

CYRANO. Yea, I insist,
Insisting not . . . Your shyness
would resist . . .

And yet . . . this kiss. . . . Refuse,
refuse it, dear!

CHRIS. [to CYRANO, *twitching his cloak.*] Why? Why?

CYRANO. [to CHRISTIAN.] Thou, be still, Christian.

ROXANE. [*leaning from her balcony.*] What? I cannot hear.

CYRANO. I rate myself, for that I was too bold.

I tell myself, "Christian, be still."

[*The archlutes sound.*] Hark! Hold! Somebody comes.

[*ROXANE shuts the window. CYRANO listens to the archlutes, one playing a merry measure, the other a dirge.*]

CYRANO. A dance? A dirge? What do the knaves desire

To say? A man? A woman? . . . Oh, . . . A friar!

[*Enter a Capuchin brother who goes from house to house, lantern in hand.*]

SCENE VII.

[CYRANO, CHRISTIAN, a Capuchin Friar.]

CYRANO. [*to the monk.*] Whom have we here, playing Diogenes?

THE FRIAR. I seek the home of . . .

CHRIS. He makes us ill at ease.

THE FRIAR. Of Magdeleine Robin.

CHRIS. Huh?

CYRANO. Here she does not dwell.

Ahead . . . keep straight ahead.

THE FRIAR. Thank you. And I will tell

My chaplet for you, to the final Pater.

CYRANO. Good luck. And blessings on your cowl, kind frater.

[*He comes down, near CHRISTIAN.*]

SCENE VIII.

[CYRANO, CHRISTIAN.]

CHRIS. Get me that kiss!

CYRANO. No.

CHRIS. Soon or late . . .

CYRANO. 'Tis true!

That maddening, perfect draught will brim for you.

Your lips will meet. Strange cause two souls to link,—

Thou hast a blond mustache; her lips are pink.

And I prefer that it should be for . . .

SCENE IX.

[CYRANO, CHRISTIAN, ROXANE.]

ROXANE. [*coming out on the balcony.*] You?

We spoke of . . . of . . . a . . .

CYRANO. Of a kiss? 'Tis true.

I see,—but see not why,—your voice should tremble.

If the word burn, what will itself resemble?

'Tis not a thing your maiden thoughts should flee.

Have you not sometimes, half insensibly,

Quitted a jesting mood, yet free from fears,

Changed from a smile to sighs, from sighs to tears?

A change as gentle and more sweet is this,—

From tears and tremblings, to a lover's kiss.

ROXANE. Ah, hush!

CYRANO. A kiss, what is it, after all?

Promise more perfect, vows that closer fall.

A troth deep plighted seeking form to prove;—

A rosy *o* writ in the verb to love;

Whispers for lips, not ears; infinity

Set to the harping of a honey bee.

A chalice like the dew-drop in a flower.

Hearts learn to breathe; Love gives them this new power.

And rising to the lips, the soul can drink.

ROXANE. Ah, hush!

CYRANO. A kiss is crowned,—Nay, Lady, think!

The Queen of France leaned to a lucky lord

And gave him one . . . the Queen!

ROXANE. Then . . . ?

CYRANO. [*uplifted.*] My adored,
I am like Buckingham, whose love
was dumb;

Like him, I love a Queen; like him
I come

As sad, as faithful. . . .

ROXANE. Though thou says it not,—
As beautiful!

CYRANO. [*dashed, and speaking aside.*]
True, I am beautiful,

I had forgot!

ROXANE. So be it! Climb! Pluck this
flower you praise for me.

CYRANO. [*pushing CHRISTIAN toward
the balcony.*] Climb!

ROXANE. This heart's breath . . .

CYRANO. . . . Climb!

ROXANE. This harping of the bee.

CYRANO. Climb!

CHRIS.

I . . . think . . . this not the mo-
ment! Let it pass! . . .

ROXANE. This moment of infini . . .

CYRANO. [*pushing.*] Climb, you ass!

CHRIS. [*overcoming his panic, eagerly
scrambles up, by the bench, the
jutting stones, the vines, and
steps over the railing into the
balcony.*] Ah, Roxane!

[*He puts his arms about her
and bends his head to her lips.*]

CYRANO. Aie, heart that suffers thus!
Oh, feast of love where I am Laza-
rus!

A single crumb falls from the rich
man's board.

My hungry heart devours it. 'Twas
my word,—

Even mine,—that won that kiss. Her
dear lips seek

His lips for words that I . . . I only
. . . speak!

[*The archlutes sound.*]

A dance? A dirge? The friar again.

[*He pretends to run, as if he
had just come up, and calls.*]

Ho, there!

ROXANE. Who is it?

CYRANO. It is I. Christian still there?

CHRIS. [*much astonished.*] What,
Cyrano?

ROXANE. Greeting, my cousin.

CYRANO. . . . Greeting.

ROXANE. I come . . .

[*She disappears into the
house. Re-enter the Ca-
puchin at the back.*]

CHRIS. [*seeing him.*] Oh!
[*He follows ROXANE.*]

SCENE X.

[CYRANO, CHRISTIAN, ROXANE, the
Capuchin, RAGUENEAU.]

THE FRIAR. It's here, I keep repeating,
Magdeleine Robin.

CYRANO. . . . Why, you said Ro-lin!

THE FRIAR. No, I said bin, sir, b-i-n,
sir, bin.

ROXANE. [*appearing on the threshold,
followed by RAGUENEAU, who
carries a lantern, and by CHRIS-
TIAN.*] What is it?

THE FRIAR. A letter.

CHRIS. . . . Hein?

THE FRIAR. . . . Some good affair
From a most worthy lord.

ROXANE. [*to CHRISTIAN.*] Of Guiche.

CHRIS. . . . He'd dare?

ROXANE. He importunes me, . . . but
our moment comes,

I love thee and . . .

[*She takes the letter and
breaks the seal. By the light
of the lantern RAGUENEAU
holds for her, she reads in a
low voice.*]

"My lady, the rude drums
Beat loud. The Regiment has
donned its mail,

It leaves, and thinks I led the way.
I fail,

And from the monastery send this
friar

To tell my disobedience,—my desire
To come to you,—and that I come.

No goat

Is simple as the monk who bears this
note.

He suspects nothing. Wait for me,
alone.

Your smiles have made me mad. Let
this atone

For my audacity, forgiven the rather

That I am one . . . et cetera . . ."

My father,
Hear what is written by this holy
scribe:

"Madam: 'Tis needful to subscribe
To th' Cardinal's will, however
hearts rebel,

So I have chosen a friar known wide
and well

For holiness, discretion, intellect,
To bring you this command. You
must respect

The bearer and the message. He will
give . . . [*she turns a page*]

The nuptial benediction,—where you
live,

And secretly. Christian becomes
your spouse.

Resign yourself. You suffer. But
your vows

Will please High Heaven Who will
bless your zeal.

Let me express the deep respect I
feel

For your obedience, knowing that
there are

Few harder duties. Yours . . .
et cetera."

THE FRIAR. [*beaming.*] O worthy gen-
tleman! I had no fear.

It was a good affair that brought
me here.

ROXANE. [*aside, to CHRISTIAN.*] Don't
I read letters well? Tell me.

CHRIS. Ah . . . hum.

ROXANE. [*aloud, despairingly.*] Oh,
woe!

THE FRIAR. [*who has flashed the light
of his lantern on CYRANO.*]

'Tis you?

CHRIS. It's me.

THE FRIAR. [*turning the light of his
lantern on him and, as if a doubt
assailed him, seeing CHRISTIAN'S
beauty.*] But . . .

ROXANE. [*hurriedly.*] "Post scriptum;
Give five-score pistoles to the
brotherhood."

THE FRIAR. Ah, worthy lord!
[*To ROXANE.*] Submit.

ROXANE. [*meekly.*] I will be good.
[*While RAGUENEAU opens the door to
the Capuchin, whom CHRISTIAN
ushers into the house. ROXANE*

says in a whisper to CYRANO.]
You'll keep the Count of
Guiche?

CYRANO. Yes, on my oath!
ROXANE. He will soon be here. Keep
him.

CYRANO. [*to the Friar.*] To plight their
troth

You need? . . .

THE FRIAR. A quarter of an hour.
CYRANO. [*hurrying them all into the
house.*] Now what known
power . . .

ROXANE. [*to CHRISTIAN.*] Come:
[*They go in.*]

CYRANO. . . . Will hold the Count a
quarter of an hour?

[*He springs up on the bench
and climbs to the balcony.*]

Come, climb! I have my plan!
[*The archlutes play a
lugubrious strain.*]

Hola! A man draws nigh,—
This time, a real one.

[*He is on the balcony; he
pulls his hat down over his
eyes; takes off his sword;
wraps his cloak about him;
then leans and looks down
from the balcony.*]

No; that is not too high.

[*He steps over the rail-
ing, and pulls toward him
a long branch of one of
the trees which grow
along the garden wall;
then grasps it with both
hands, ready to let him-
self drop.*]

I'm going to trouble this calm eve-
ning air.

SCENE XI.

[CYRANO, the COUNT OF GUICHE.]

GUICHE. [*who enters, masked, stum-
bling in the dark.*] Where is
that damned Capuchin, curse
him? Where?

CYRANO. The devil! What about my
voice?

[*Freeing the branch with one hand, he seems to turn an invisible key.*] Cric, crac!
[*Solemnly.*] Resume the accent, lad, of Bergerac!

GUICHE. [*looking at the house.*] Oh, damn this mask! A light would be a boon.

[*He assures himself about the door he seeks, and is about to enter. CYRANO leaps from the balcony, holding on by the branch, which, bending, lets him fall between the door and the COUNT OF GUICHE. He pretends to fall heavily as if from a great height. Flat upon the ground, he lies motionless as if stunned. The COUNT leaps back.*] Hein? What?

[*When he looks up, the branch has sprung back; he sees only the sky; he is mystified.*]

Whence came this fellow?

CYRANO. [*sitting up and speaking with the Gascon accent.*]

From the Moon!

GUICHE. From the . . .

CYRANO. [*still speaking in a far-away voice.*] What is the hour?

GUICHE. He's reft of reason.

CYRANO. What hour? What land? What day? What season?

GUICHE. But . . .

CYRANO. I'm dizzy.

GUICHE. Sir . . .

CYRANO. Giddy . . . for like a bomb I hurtled from the moon.

GUICHE. [*impatently.*] Nonsense, man.

CYRANO. [*standing up and speaking in a terrible voice.*]

Thence I come!

GUICHE. [*recoiling.*] So be it. You fell.

[*Aside.*] A lunatic, of course.

CYRANO. Not metaphorically but with force.

GUICHE. But . . .

CYRANO. Centuries ago . . . or else, a minute, . . .

How long I fell, I know not. I was in it. . . .

That saffron ball up yonder in the sky!

GUICHE. [*shrugging his shoulders.*]

Yes. Let me pass.

CYRANO. [*intercepting him.*] Be candid.

Where am I?

Keep nothing from me. On what earthly site

Have I descended like an aerolite?

GUICHE. 'Sdeath!

CYRANO. Falling, I had no choice, nor time to tell

What should befall me,—nor where I befell.

GUICHE. I tell you, sir . . .

CYRANO. [*with a shriek of terror which makes the COUNT fall back.*]

Good Lord! Alack! Alack!

In this new country all the men are black!

GUICHE. [*putting his hand to his face.*] What?

CYRANO. [*with every evidence of panic.*] Am I in Algiers? Are all the men

Black as . . .

GUICHE. [*who has felt his mask.*] This mask!

CYRANO. [*feigning assurance.*] I am in Venice then.

GUICHE. [*trying to pass.*] I came to meet a lady.

CYRANO. [*completely reassured.*] I'm in Paris!

GUICHE. [*laughing in spite of himself.*] The droll is fairly droll.

CYRANO. You laugh? . . .

GUICHE. Yes . . . there is No less desire to pass.

CYRANO. Paris, no doubt.

[*He is quite at ease, now; he laughs, brushes off the dust of his fall, bows.*]

I came,—your pardon,—through a waterspout,

Cloudburst, that left its spray. I have journeyed, sir.

My eyes are full of stardust. Ha, . . . this spur

Caught in a comet's tail. This golden tinge

[*He brushes his sleeve delicately.*]

Here, on my doublet, is a meteor's fringe.

[*He blows it away, daintily.*]

GUICHE. [*beside himself.*] Sir . . .

CYRANO. [*as the COUNT tries to pass, stops him by thrusting out his leg, as if to show him something.*] See, there, on my calf,—mark of a tooth?

The Great Bear bit me. As I dodged, forsooth

I missed the Trident but I fell ker-plunk!

Into the Balances. See they are sunk!

They mark my weight. Look how the record lingers.

[*He buttonholes the COUNT, who tries to pass him.*]

'Twould prove a fount of milk.

GUICHE. Milk?

CYRANO. Even
From the Milky Way.

GUICHE. Oh, go to hell!

CYRANO. I came from Heaven.
[*He crosses his arms.*] Would you believe, Sirius,—I saw this sight,—

Puts on a cloudy nightcap every night?

[*Confidentially.*] The Little Bear can't bite;—he tries to nip.

[*Laughing.*] I broke a string in Lyra by a slip.

[*Superbly.*] I mean to write my travels in a book.

These stars entangled in my mantle,
—look,—

When I've recorded all my divers risks,

These captured stars shall serve as asterisks.

GUICHE. Nevertheless, I wish . . .

CYRANO. I get you now!

GUICHE. Sir . . .

CYRANO. You would learn,—'tis reasonable enow,—

From one who has been there, if it's made of cheese,

Or if folk live there natural as you please.

GUICHE. [*storming.*] But no! I wish . . .

CYRANO. To hear of my ascension?

GUICHE. [*discouraged.*] Fool!

CYRANO. Regiomontanus tried an eagle's wings;

Archytas made a pigeon,—silly things.

GUICHE. A fool, of course, and yet a learned fool.

CYRANO. I never imitate,—I make the rule.

[*The COUNT has succeeded in passing him and he strides to ROXANE's door. CYRANO follows him, ready to lay hold on him.*]

By six sure methods I can rise like vapor.

GUICHE. [*turning.*] Six?

CYRANO. I could stand naked like a waxen taper,

Caparisoned with crystal phials clear,

Unstoppled, filled with summer's earliest tear,—

My body to the sunlight I'd expose,
And it were lifted as the dew arose.

GUICHE. [*his attention engaged, taking a step toward CYRANO.*]

Ho! That makes one way.

[*CYRANO draws back as GUICHE approaches.*]

CYRANO. And again, I might

Draw wind into a vacuum,—keep it tight,—

Rarefy them, by glowing mirrors, pressed

Isosahedron-wise within a chest.

GUICHE. [*coming another step.*] Two!

CYRANO. Then, both mechanic and inventor, I

Make a steel grasshopper and let it fly

By swift explosions, till it fire me far
To the blue pastures of the farthest star.

GUICHE. [*following him, unsuspectingly, as CYRANO leads him to the other side of the way, always farther from ROXANE's door.*]

Three!

CYRANO. Or, since smoke rises in its natural state,

I'd catch a globeful, equal to my weight.

GUICHE. [*same business, always more and more astonished.*] Four!

CYRANO. Luna loves, what time her
bow is narrow,
To suck beef-marrow, so I'd smear
with marrow.

GUICHE. [*amazed.*] Five!

CYRANO. [*who as he talks has led him
to the other side of the square,
near a bench.*] On an iron disc
I'd stand with care,
And toss a lodestone lightly in the
air.

That is a good way. When the iron
flew,

Drawn by the magnet, as we nearer
drew,

I'd catch the magnet,—toss it up!
You see,

One might keep climbing through
eternity.

GUICHE. Six! And all excellent. Now,
tell me, pray,

Which method did you choose?

CYRANO. A seventh way!

GUICHE. Indeed! And what?

CYRANO. Give up! You'd never guess!

GUICHE. Stark mad, but most ingen-
ious none the less.

CYRANO. [*making a sound like waves
on the shore, and wide, mysteri-
ous gestures.*] Woosh! Woosh!

GUICHE. What's that?

CYRANO. You've guessed it?

GUICHE. No.

CYRANO. It is the ocean!

When the moon moved the yearning
tide to motion

I lay out on the sands, wave-wet,
and so

My head was moved, and lifted . . .
lifted slow,—

Hair holds the water, sir,—and *very*
slowly,

I rose, just like an angel, stiff and
holy.

Effortless, splendid, high above all
men

I rose . . . I rose . . . I felt a
shock. . . .

GUICHE. [*engulfed in curiosity and sit-
ting down on the bench.*]

And then? . . .

CYRANO. Then . . .

[*Taking his natural
voice once more.*]

The time is up, Sir, and I set you
free.

The wedding's over.

GUICHE. [*leaping to his feet.*] What
has come over me?

That voice!

[*The house door swings open;
lackeys appear carrying
lighted sconces. A flood of
light. CYRANO, with a sweep-
ing bow, doffs his plumed hat.*]

GUICHE. That nose!

CYRANO. [*saluting.*] Sir, while we
spoke of wings,

Exchanging fancies, they exchanged
their rings.

GUICHE. Who?

[*They turn. Behind the
lackeys, ROXANE and CHRIS-
TIAN, hand in hand. The
Friar follows them, smiling
benignly. RAGUENEAU holds a
torch high. The DUENNA
brings up the rear of the pro-
cession, a bewildered figure
in a short bed gown.*]

SCENE XII.

[*The Same; ROXANE, CHRISTIAN,
the Friar, RAGUENEAU, Lackeys,
the DUENNA.*]

GUICHE. [*to ROXANE.*] You?

[*Recognizing CHRISTIAN with stupe-
faction.*] He!

[*Bowing low to ROXANE.*] Most art-
fully contrived!

[*To CYRANO.*] My compliments.
The perils you survived,
And your inventions, would arrest a
mortal,

Though he were saint, at heaven's
very portal.

Pray, sir, record them, for the
future's sake.

CYRANO. [*bowing.*] Sir, 'tis a counsel
I engage to take.

THE FRIAR. [*pointing to the lovers,
wagging his long white beard
and addressing the COUNT with
great satisfaction.*] A handsome
couple! They obeyed you well.

GUICHE. [*looking at him stonily.*] Yes.

[To ROXANE.] Madam, kindly bid
your spouse farewell.

ROXANE. What? Why?

GUICHE. [to CHRISTIAN.] The Regi-
ment already marches out.

Join it.

ROXANE. To go to war?

GUICHE. Aye, past all doubt.

ROXANE. But the Cadets go not.

GUICHE. They go, indeed.

[He takes a paper from his pocket.]

The orders. [To CHRISTIAN.]

Take them, Baron, and with speed.

ROXANE. [throwing herself into CHRIS-
TIAN's arms.] Christian!

GUICHE. [chuckling, to CYRANO.] The
nuptial night is far off, still.

CYRANO. [aside.] He thinks that
thought has done me mortal ill.

CHRIS. [to ROXANE.] Thy lips, . . .
once more, . . . once more!

CYRANO. Enough. Ah, go!

CHRIS. [still embracing ROXANE.] 'Tis
hard to give her up.

Thou knowst not.

CYRANO. Aye, I know!

[Far away, drums are
heard, sounding a march.]

GUICHE. [coming forward.] The Regi-
ment departs.

ROXANE. [to CYRANO, while she holds
CHRISTIAN back, as CYRANO tries
to lead him away.] I trust you.
Oh,

Don't let him be in danger, Cyrano!
Promise!

CYRANO. I'll try. And yet, however
prayerful,

One cannot always . . .

ROXANE. Promise he'll be
careful!

CYRANO. I'll do my utmost. . . .

ROXANE. Make him take some rest,
And not get chilled.

CYRANO. I'll do my very best.
But . . .

ROXANE. That he will be faithful.

CYRANO. I declare
I am sure . . .

ROXANE. That he'll write often!

CYRANO. [standing suddenly motion-
less.] That, I swear!

[Curtain.]

ACT IV

CADETS OF GASCONY

*The post occupied by the company of
CARBON OF CASTEL-JALOUX at the Siege
of Arras.*

*In the background breastworks trav-
erse the entire scene. Beyond, a plain
stretches to the horizon. The ground is
furrowed with earthworks. Far away,
against the skyline, the walls and roofs
of Arras.*

Tents; scattered arms; drums, etc.

*It is near daybreak. The East is pale
gold.*

*Sentinels are posted at intervals.
Camp fires burn low. Rolled in their
cloaks, the CADETS of Gascony sleep.
CARBON OF CASTEL-JALOUX and LE
BRET watch. They are pale and very
thin. In the foreground, wrapped in his
cloak, CHRISTIAN sleeps among the rest,
his face lit by the firelight. Silence.*

SCENE I.

[CHRISTIAN, CARBON OF CASTEL-
JALOUX, LE BRET, the CADETS,
later, CYRANO.]

LE BRET. Horrible!

CARBON. Nothing is left!

LE BRET. 'Sdeath!

CARBON. [signing to him to speak
softly.] Soft! Lest thou wake
them! Swear beneath thy breath.

[To the CADETS.] 'Shsh! Sleep.
Who sleeps dines.

LE BRET. And who wakes,
dines not.

What dearth! What famine!

[A gunshot is heard
in the distance.]

CARBON. Curse that noisy shot!
They'll wake my children.

[To some of the CADETS, who stir.]
Sleep!

A CADET. [moving uneasily.] Damn it!
They begin

Again.

CARBON. It's nothing. Cyrano comes
in.

[*The lifted heads fall back; the CADETS sleep again.*]

A SENTINEL. [*without.*] Zcunds!

Who goes there?

THE VOICE OF CYRANO. Bergerac!

THE SENTINEL. [*on the ramparts.*]

Give the word.

CYRANO. [*appearing on the crest of the ramparts.*] Bergerac, you fool.

LE BRET. [*going to meet him, disgusted.*] Good Lord!

CYRANO. [*signing to him not to wake the CADETS.*] Sh!

LE BRET. Wounded?

CYRANO. Nay! Thou

knowst it is their rule

To miss me every morning.

LE BRET. Such a fool!

Each day! To take a letter! . . .

Nearly light. . . .

Always this risk . . . !

CYRANO. [*stopping at CHRISTIAN'S side.*] I promised he would write.

[*He looks at him.*] He sleeps. He is pale. Poor child, she does not know

He is starving. . . . But still beautiful.

LE BRET. Oh, go

And get some sleep.

CYRANO. Don't scold, Le Bret.

I have found

A way to cross their lines both safe and sound.

A post that's guarded,—but by drunken men.

LE BRET. I wish you brought some victuals with you, then!

CYRANO. One must tread lightly! But, being near their trench,

I got an inkling that ere night the French

Will eat or die.

LE BRET. Quick . . . tell!

CYRANO. Nay, wait and see.

I am not sure . . .

CARBON. What shame, what infamy

Besiegers die of hunger!

LE BRET. Aye, alas!

Never was siege like this siege of Arras.

We compass Arras. Cardinal Infant

Of Spain besieges us,—and brings this want.

CYRANO. Now, someone should besiege the Heir of Spain.

LE BRET. I do not laugh.

CYRANO. Oh, oh!

LE BRET. Large risk,—small gain.

Thy life against a letter. Oh, I smother

With rage. Where now?

[*Seeing him go toward a tent.*]

CYRANO. I go to write another.

[*He raises the tent flap and disappears.*]

SCENE II.

[*The Same, without CYRANO.*]

[*The dawn brightens. There are rosy streaks along the eastern sky. The city of Arras is gold on the horizon. A cannon shot is heard; followed by the sound of distant drums on the left. Other drums sound nearer. They come closer, as if they were at hand, and then go farther away on the right, going through the whole camp. The camp is waking. Officers' voices are heard in the distance.*]

CARBON. The bugle-call. Alas, it is so fleet—

Succulent sleep! I know what they will cry.

A CADET. [*sitting up.*] Something to eat!

ANOTHER. I starve.

CARBON. Get up.

3RD CADET. I cannot move.

4TH CADET. No good.

THE FIRST. [*using his cuirass as a mirror.*] My tongue is coated. Wind's unwholesome food.

ANOTHER. I'd give my baron's wreath for bread and cheese.

Achilles sulked when far less ill at ease.

ANOTHER. Is his windpipe a fellow's only pipe?

I want some food. I'm tired of eating tripe!

ANOTHER. Bread!

CARBON. [*going to the tent into which CYRANO disappeared, and whispering.*] Cyrano!

OTHER CADETS. We die!

CARBON. [*still in a whisper, at the tent flap.*] Come to our aid.

They feed upon thy banter. I am dismayed. . . .

Rally them, thou!

2ND CADET. [*rushing up to the first, who is chewing something.*]

Hey, there, what is't you munch?

1ST CADET. I have a bit of greasy tow for lunch.

It's soaked in axle grease for cannon wheels.

Outskirts of Arras furnish luscious meals.

ANOTHER. [*entering.*] I have been hunting.

ANOTHER. [*coming in at the same moment.*] I fished in the Scarp.

ALL. [*getting up and rushing toward the newcomers.*] What did you get? A pheasant? You? A carp?

Quick! Show us, quick!

THE FISHER. A gudgeon.

THE HUNTER. Sparrow.

ALL. [*exasperated.*] Oh!

Enough. Let's mutiny!

CARBON. Help, Cyrano!
[*It is bright daylight.*]

SCENE III.

[*The Same; CYRANO.*]

CYRANO. [*coming out of his tent, calm; a pen behind his ear, a book in his hand.*] Hein?

[*To the FIRST CADET.*] Why dost thou tread with such a halting gait?

THE CADET. I've something in my shoe,—a dragging weight.

CYRANO. Why, what is that?

THE CADET. A stomach.

CYRANO. So have I.

THE CADET. It must impede you.

CYRANO. No, it lifts me high.

ANOTHER. My teeth feel long.

CYRANO. Hold fast. with teeth so large.

A THIRD. My belly rumbles.

CYRANO. It will sound the charge.

ANOTHER. My ears are ringing.

CYRANO. 'Tis a lie he hears.

Who rang a breakfast bell in that man's ears?

ANOTHER. Something to eat, with oil!

CYRANO. [*snatching his helmet off and thrusting it into his hands.*]

Thy salad, lad.

ANOTHER. What is there to devour?

CYRANO. [*tossing him the book he had in his hand.*] The *Iliad*.

ANOTHER. The minister at Paris richly dines.

CYRANO. Shall he send grouse, or quail?

THE CADET. Why not? And wines!

CYRANO. Burgundy, Richelieu! This delay is rude.

THE CADET. By what Capuchin?

CYRANO. Oh, some friar,—stewed.

ANOTHER. I'm hungry as a hound!

CYRANO. Then eat thy hair.

1ST CADET. Absurd!

Always the word, the point!

CYRANO. Always the point, the word!

And I would die, at eve 'neath rosy skies,

Making a brave jest for a high emprise!

Pierced by the only noble weapon made,

And by a knightly foeman; unafraid;

On glory's field,—not deathbed's dull eclipse;

A point within my heart,—and on my lips.

A CRY FROM ALL THE CADETS. I am hungry!

CYRANO. [*folding his arms.*] What? You talk of food again?

Come, Bertrandou, the fifer, ancient swain,

Take from its leathern case thy ebon fife.

These greedy-guts think meat is more than life.

Play to them . . . country airs, . . . the soft notes falling

Like little sisters' voices, calling,
calling;
Songs of our land; echoes of our own
folk,

Airs that rise gently like the wreaths
of smoke,

That from the hearthfires of our
birthplace come,—

Old airs that seem the very voice of
homel

[*The old fifer sits down
and draws out his fife.*]

Now let thy fife, a soldier tried and
good,

Recall, a moment, feeling on her
wood

Thy fingers move like song birds,
light and free,

She was a reed, ere she was ebony!

Let her own voice surprise her soul in
sooth,

Call back her rustic peace, her heart
of youth!

[*The old man begins to
play Languedocian airs.*]

Oh, listen, Gascons! The shrill fife
is mute.

Under his fingers, 'tis a woodland
flute.

No breath of battle echoes in these
notes.

It is the galoubet that calls the goats!
Hark . . . 'tis the vale, the wood, the
land outspread;

The small brown goatherd, with his
bonnet red; . . .

Green twilight . . . rivers whisper-
ing to the lea.

Ah, listen, Gascons. It is Gascony.

[*All the heads are bowed;
all the eyes dream; tears
are furtively dried on
sleeves or hems of cloaks.*]

CARBON. [*to CYRANO.*] You make
them weep.

CYRANO. Nostalgia is an ill
Nobler than hunger. Man is spirit
still!

I love the change the airs of home
could make.

The heartache helps to heal their
belly-ache.

CARBON. Making them tender, thou
wilt make them weak.

CYRANO. [*who signs to a drummer to
approach.*] No fear! Their
heroes' blood is swift to speak,
Quick to awaken.

[*He gives a signal.
The drum sounds.*]

ALL. [*springing up and seizing their
arms.*] Hein? What? What's
that?

CYRANO. That soul
Wakes to one drum beat, to a single
roll.

Farewell, dreams, tears, regrets, old
scenes! And come

All the flute banished,—wakened by
the drum!

A CADET. [*who has been looking toward
the background.*] Ah, hah! The
Count of Guiche.

ALL THE CADETS. [*grumbling.*] Huh!

CYRANO. [*smiling.*] How that
charmer

Is welcomed, here.

A CADET. He makes us tired!

ANOTHER. His armor
Decked with lace collars,—man you
can't rely on.

ANOTHER. Linen wa'n't made to wear
atop of iron!

1ST CADET. Good if you have a boil, a
fat feruncle!

2ND CADET. The courtier, always.

ANOTHER. Nephew of his uncle.

CARBON. Still he's a Gascon.

1ST CADET. Title's rather
hazy.

Because . . . why, Gascons . . .
Gascons must be crazy.

A sober Gascon is too dangerous.

LE BRET. He is pale.

ANOTHER. Hungry, poor devil, like the
rest of us!

But, since his breastplate is with sil-
ver dight,

His cramping belly twinkles in the
light!

CYRANO. [*hurriedly.*] Dice! Cards!
He mustn't find us in the dumps!

[*In a moment, they all be-
gin to play cards, to throw
dice, sitting on drums or
camp stools or their
cloaks on the ground;
they light long pipes.*]

[*Taking a slim volume out of his pocket.*] Discard Descartes?
No, books are always trumps!

[*He walks up and down, reading. The COUNT OF GUICHE enters. Everybody seems occupied and cheerful. He is very pale. He goes to CARBON.*]

SCENE IV.

[*The Same; the COUNT OF GUICHE.*]

GUICHE. [*to CARBON.*] Good morning.
[*They scrutinize each other. Aside, with satisfaction.*]
He is green.

CARBON. [*aside.*] He is all eyes.

GUICHE. [*looking at the CADETS.*]
Here are my critics, then? Yes, I am wise,—

I have reports of the abuse one hears;
That the Cadets,—these lofty mountaineers,—

These rowdy squires,—barons of Perigord,—

Have for their Colonel not a decent word;

That I am called courtier, schemer; that I fail

To please them wearing lace above my mail;

That it offends them, in good sooth, to see

A Gascon, who yet goes not beggarly.

[*Silence. They play. They smoke.*]

Pray, shall I have your captain punish you?

No.

CARBON. It is, moreover, what I will not do.

GUICHE. Ah?

CARBON. I pay my Company; 'tis mine, till death.

I obey field orders only.

GUICHE. Ah? My faith, That settles it.

[*Addressing himself to the CADETS.*]

I can despise your folly;
The world knows how I face the muskets' volley.

At Baupaume yesterday, they hailed with joy

The way I met and put to rout Bucquoi.

Ah, there was action lesser fights to dwarf!

Three times I charged!

CYRANO. [*without raising his eyes from his book.*] And what about your scarf?

GUICHE. [*surprised and gratified.*]

You know that detail? Thus it came about,—

'Twas as I wheeled to follow up the rout.

Assembling my command for this third charge,

Some fleeing foeman swept me to the marge

Of their main force. I saw I might be hit,

Or captured surely. So I had the wit To loose the scarf of white that told the worth

Of such a capture,—let it slip to earth;

Without insignia to attract their aim, I dodged the Spaniards. When once more I came,

I led the Regiment! Ah, that is war! What do you say?

[*The CADETS have appeared not to listen; but now cards and dice boxes are held suspended; the pipe smoke is held in their cheeks. Attention.*]

CYRANO. That Henry of Navarre Had not consented,—to give safety room—

To lower himself by doffing his white plume.

[*Silent joy. The cards are lowered; dice rattle; smoke exhales.*]

GUICHE. The dodge succeeded well.

[*Same expectancy; cards, dice and pipes held in suspense.*]

CYRANO. Though that may be, To be a target for the enemy

Is not an honor one would lightly yield.

[Cards are shuffled; dice are thrown; smoke wreathes rise; waxing satisfaction.]

Had I been present, sir, upon that field,

—Our courage differs thus,—I should have raised

And worn it.

GUICHE. Still Gascon, still self-praised!

CYRANO. Self-praised!

Lend it to me! This morning under fire,

I'll lead the assault and wear it in saltire!

GUICHE. A Gascon's offer, knowing well the scarp

Lies with the enemy along the Scarpe,

In a place hotly raked by canister.

No one can fetch it.

CYRANO. *[taking the white military scarp from his pocket and handing it to him.]* I have brought it, sir.

[Silence. The CADETS cover their laughter in the hands dealt them and in dice-boxes. The COUNT turns to look at them. Immediately they are grave again; they resume their play; one whistles the air the fifer played.]

GUICHE. I thank you. Having this fair scarp to shake,

I'll make a signal I was loathe to make.

[He climbs to the top of the breastworks and waves the scarf repeatedly.]

THE SENTINEL. *[on the breastworks.]*

That man down there, who saves himself by running! . . .

GUICHE. *[coming down.]* A traitor spy. I've matched the Spaniard's cunning.

He serves us well, bearing them information—

Which I supply. You see, by this gradation

I influence the game they are playing.

CYRANO. A scurvy knave!

GUICHE. *[carelessly, knotting his scarf.]* But useful. . . . We were saying? . . .

Ah, yes! I meant to tell you this. Last night,—

A desperate hazard for our desperate plight,—

The Marshall marched to Dourlens, on the chance

Of joining there the sutlers' stores of France,

To revictual us. But, since supplies encumber,

He drew upon the troops to such a number

The foe would find an easy task, attacking

Our camp to-day. Why, half the army's lacking.

CARBON. That might be serious if our friends the foe

Knew of that sortie. But they don't?

GUICHE. They know.

They will attack.

CARBON. Ah!

GUICHE. Their false spy's . . . indiscretion

Enabled me to learn of their aggression.

He added, "My report when I go back

Decides it. At what point shall they attack?

I shall report that place as least defended.

There they will concentrate." So, when he ended,

I answered, "Good. Go, watch along the line.

Bid them attack where you descry my sign!"

CARBON. *[to the CADETS.]* Make ready, gentlemen!

[They all rise. Clatter of swords and buckling on of belts.]

GUICHE. One hour hence. . . .

1ST CADET. Oh! . . . Play!

[They all sit down again and resume the interrupted game.]

GUICHE. *[to CARBON.]* We must gain

time. The Marshall's on the way.

CARBON. And to gain time . . . ?

GUICHE. Why, you will have the kindness

To let yourselves be killed.

CYRANO. And you, avenged?

GUICHE. 'Twere blindness

To think I love you. I pretend naught. Still

While choosing you and yours suits me not ill,

Your crazy courage is a far-famed thing,

And serving my revenge, I serve my King.

CYRANO. I am your debtor for this thing you've done.

GUICHE. You like to fight a hundred to your one.

I'll not withhold the opportunity.

[*He goes toward CARBON.*]

CYRANO. We'll deck her blazons, lads of Gascony!

Six chevrons, gold and azure, make it gay;—

We'll add a crimson chevron, boys, to-day.

[*GUICHE speaks in a low voice to CARBON OF CASTEL-JALOUX. Orders are given. The defense is prepared. CYRANO goes towards CHRISTIAN, who stands motionless, his arms crossed on his breast.*]

CYRANO. [*putting his hand on CHRISTIAN'S shoulder.*] Christian?

CHRIS. [*mournfully shaking his head.*] Roxane!

CYRANO. Alas!

CHRIS. I could bear it better
If I could say good-bye in one fair letter.

CYRANO. I thought 'twould be to-day—
Oh, just a guess . . .

[*He takes a letter from his breast.*]
I wrote thy farewell.

CHRIS. Show me.

CYRANO. Show . . . ?

CHRIS. Why, yes!
[*CHRISTIAN opens it, begins to read, stops suddenly.*]

Hold . . . !

CYRANO. What?

CHRIS. This little ring . . . ?

CYRANO. [*hastily seizes the letter, and looks at it with an innocent air.*]
A ring?

CHRIS. A tear!

CYRANO. Yes . . . Yes . . . A poet
finds his work so dear . . .

He is enwrapt. . . . This was . . . a
moving theme.

I moved myself to tears, with this,
thy dream.

CHRIS. Tears . . . ?

CYRANO. Yes . . . because . . .
death is not terrible,

But . . . never see her more! That's
horrible!

For nevermore will I . . .
[*CHRISTIAN stares at him.*] . . . will
we

[*Hastily.*] wilt thou. . . .

CHRIS. [*snatching the letter from him.*]
Give it to me!

[*Afar, one hears a noise
in the camp.*]

VOICE OF THE SENTINEL. 'Odsbody,
who comes now?

[*Musket shots. Voices.
Jingle of harness.*]

CARBON. What's this?

SENTINEL. [*on the ramparts.*] A
coach!

[*Everybody rushes to see.*]

CRIS. A coach in camp! A
wonder!

And from the Spaniard's side! Blood,
death and thunder!

Fire! No! The coachman's calling.
. . . What's this thing?

He is crying "Service of the King!"

GUICHE. The King?

[*Everybody falls back
and forms in line.*]

CARBON. Heads bared!

GUICHE. [*calling.*] Fall in, there! 'Tis
the King he serves.

Give place. With due pomp let him
make the curves.

[*The coach comes on at a
full trot. It is covered
with mud and dust. The
curtains are drawn. Two
footmen ride behind. It
comes sharply to a halt.*]

CARBON. [*calling.*] Sound the salute!
 [*The drums roll. All the CADETS stand with bared heads.*]

GUICHE. Let down the steps!
 [*Two men leap to obey. The door is opened.*]

ROXANE. [*springing from the coach.*]
 Good day!

[*The sound of a woman's voice brings up in a flash all the heads that were so profoundly bowed. Stupefaction.*]

SCENE V.

[*The Same; ROXANE.*]

GUICHE. King's business. . . . You? . . .

ROXANE. King Love! What other, pray?

CYRANO. Great God!

CHRIS. [*rushing forward.*] You? Why?

ROXANE. The siege went slowly, sir.

CHRIS. Why? . . .

ROXANE. I will tell thee. . . .

CYRANO. [*who, at the sound of her voice, has stood, head bared, immobile, not daring to lift his eyes.*] God! To look on her!

GUICHE. You cannot stay here.

ROXANE. But I will, you know.
 Will you bring up that drum?

[*She seats herself on the drum which somebody hastens to bring for her.*] Ah, thank you! So!

[*She laughs.*] My coach was fired on! Truly!

[*Proudly.*] A patrol!
 'Tis like the pumpkin coach, upon my soul—

Now isn't it? Just like the fairy tale,
 With the rat footmen.

[*Throwing a kiss to CHRISTIAN with the tips of her fingers.*]

Greeting!

[*She looks at everybody.*] You are pale.

Do you know 'tis far, to Arras?

[*Seeing CYRANO.*] Greeting, Cousin.
 La me!

CYRANO. [*coming forward.*] How could you. . . . Oh . . . ?

ROXANE. How could I find the Army?

My friend, it was too simple. We drove straight

Where all the land was ravaged,—desolate.

Ah, God! the horror! No one could believe,

Not having seen. Sirs, if your king receive

Such service,—mine's a better king!

CYRANO. 'Tis mad!

How the devil could you pass?

ROXANE. We had

To come by the Spanish lines. . . .

1ST CADET. The subtle Shes!

GUICHE. How could you pass their lines and come to these?

LE BRET. Surely, most difficult.

ROXANE. Why, no, not very.

We just drove through, my coach with my equeury.

If some hidalgo showed a visage grim,

Through parted curtains, I just smiled at him.

Those greatest gallants of the world,
 —I say

So much to Frenchmen,—sped me on my way.

CARBON. Certes, it is a passport,—Roxane's smile!

And yet, they must have asked you, mile by mile,

Whither you went?

ROXANE. Oh, that? Yes, oft and over!

I answered, "Sirs, I go to see my lover."

At that, the Spaniard of the fiercest mien

Would close the door, as if he served a queen,

And with a gesture worthy of a king,
 Wave back the guns already threatening,—

With all the haughty grandeur of his race

Stand, so the wind would ruffle his sleeve lace

And show his plumes like breeze-blown pampas grass;
 Then—"Señorita," bowing, "you may pass."
 CHRIS. But, Roxane . . .
 ROXANE. I said, "my lover," spite our vows.
 Thou knowest, love if I had said, "my spouse,"
 They wouldn't let me pass.

CHRIS. But . . .
 ROXANE. What is wrong?
 GUICHE. You must go.
 ROXANE. I?
 CYRANO. With speed!
 LE BRET. Oh, go along!
 CHRIS. Yes!
 ROXANE. Why?
 CHRIS. [*embarrassed.*] Because . . . because . . .

CYRANO. [*same.*] Oh, while we prattle . . .
 GUICHE. [*same.*] The hour speeds . . .
 CARBON. [*same.*] You'd best . . .
 LE BRET. [*same.*] You might . . .
 ROXANE. A battle!
 I shall stay.

ALL. No!
 ROXANE. My husband!
 [*She throws herself into CHRISTIAN's arms.*]
 We will die Together.

CHRIS. How your eyes shine!
 ROXANE. Knowst thou why?
 GUICHE. [*frantic.*] This is a fearful post!

ROXANE. [*turning.*] Fearful?
 CYRANO. Needs but to state
 He gave it us.
 ROXANE. You'd have me desolate,—
 Widowed? . . .

GUICHE. I swear! . . .
 ROXANE. Nay, I am mad!
 Refusing
 To leave, I please myself. It is . . . amusing.

CYRANO. What's here? The Euphuist is heroine?

ROXANE. My lord of Bergerac, we two are kin.

A CADET. We will defend you well!
 ROXANE. [*more and more feverishly excited.*] My friends, I know it!

ANOTHER. [*intoxicated with joy.*] The whole camp smells of orris!

ROXANE. I can show it,—
 How well this hat becomes me in a fight.

[*Looking at the COUNT OF GUICHE.*]
 Perhaps 'tis time the Count were taking flight;
 The action might begin.

GUICHE. This is too much. I am gone
 To inspect the guns. I shall return anon.

'Tis not too late. Give up this frantic plan.

Ah, come away.

ROXANE. Never!
 [*GUICHE goes out.*]

SCENE VI.

[*The Same, without the COUNT OF GUICHE.*]

CHRIS. [*imploring.*] Roxane, Roxane!
 ROXANE. No.

1ST CADET. [*to the others.*] She stays!

ALL. [*rushing about, jostling, snatching.*] My soap! A razor! Ass,
 Where is my comb? A pin! A looking glass!

ROXANE. [*to CYRANO, who tries to move her.*] No power on earth can budge me from this place.

CARBON. [*after having, like the rest, brushed his uniform, dusted his wide hat, pranked his plume, and settled his cuffs, advances toward ROXANE.*] Will you permit, of your exceeding grace,

That I present these barons who adore you,
 Who'll have the honour soon to die before you?

[*ROXANE bows assent and standing waiting, her hand on CHRISTIAN's arm.*]

CARBON. [*presents.*] Baron of Peyrescous of Colignac.

THE CADET. [*saluting.*] Madam . . .

CARBON. [*continuing.*] Of Casterac of Cahuzac,

Viscount of Malgouvre of Escarabiot,—
Chevalier of Antignac, Baron Hollot
Of Castel-Crabioules of Salechan. . . .

ROXANE. How many names has each?
BARON HILLOT. Crowds,—every

man!
CARBON. Open the hand that holds
your handkerchief.

[ROXANE opens her hand and
the handkerchief drops.]

ROXANE. Why?
[Every man in the Company stoops to pick it up.]

CARBON. [quickly picking it up himself,
ahead of them all.] We lacked
a banner. Now, 'tis my belief,
We have the bonniest in all this
place.

ROXANE. [smiling.] 'Tis rather tiny.

CARBON. But already lace!
[He attaches the little
handkerchief to his
Captain's lance.]

A CADET. [to the others.] I could die
happy with that face in sight,
If I could hand my stomach just one
bite!

CARBON. [who has heard; indignant.]
Shame! "Talk of eating, when a
lovely woman . . ."

ROXANE. Camp air whets appetite.
And, being human,
I too am hungry. Pastry, meat and
wine,—
Bring me my breakfast, please.

[Consternation.]

A CADET. She wants to dine!

ANOTHER. Good God, where will we
get it?

ROXANE. [serenely.] In my coach.

ALL. Hein?

ROXANE. You must carve and serve.
As you approach,
Observe the coachman closely, gentle-
men;—

A man of many arts, you meet
again.

Ask him, if you would have the
sauces vary!

THE CADETS. [running to the coach.]

It is Ragueneau!

[Acclamations.] Oh, oh!

ROXANE. [following them with her
eyes.] Poor lads!

CYRANO. [kissing her hand.] Good
fairy!

RAGUE. [standing up on the coachman's
box like a mountebank at a
fair.] Gentlemen. . . .

THE CADETS. [wild enthusiasm.]
Bravo!

RAGUE. As the foe we passed,
He knew we passed,—but knew not
what repast! [Great applause.]

CYRANO. [whispering to CHRISTIAN.]
Hum . . . Christian . . .

RAGUE. Asked our aim,—learned
the same,
[He draws from under
the box-seat a great
platter of game.]

—Yes, heard our aim, nor knew it
brought down game!

[Applause. The platter
is handed from hand to
hand.]

CYRANO. [to CHRISTIAN, whispering.]
One word, I beg. . . .

RAGUE. Venus so moved his heart,
He quite forgot . . .

[He waves a haunch of venison.]
Diana had a hart.

[Waxing enthusiasm. The
roast is seized by twenty
outstretched hands.]

CYRANO. [whispering to CHRISTIAN.]
I want to tell thee . . .

ROXANE. [to THE CADETS who are com-
ing down, their arms full of
provisions.] Put it on the
ground.

[She spreads a tablecloth
on the grass, aided
by two imperturbable
footmen from the coach.]

ROXANE. [to CHRISTIAN, as CYRANO
tries to take him aside.] Come
and be useful.

RAGUE. A peacock.

1ST CADET. [coming down, carving a
great dish of ham as he comes.]

I'll be bound

We will not die without the recollec-
tion

Of one great gorge. . . . Oh,
hell! . . .

[*Checking himself at sight of ROXANE.*] I mean, refection.

RAGUE. [*tossing down the carriage cushions.*] Cushions full of ortolans.

[*Tumult. They empty the cushions. Laughter. Joy.*]

3RD CADET. Aha, my boobies!

RAGUE. [*producing white wine.*] Flagons of topaz!

[*Flasks of red wine.*] Flagons of rubies!

ROXANE. [*tossing a folded cloth to CYRANO.*] Unfold this table-cloth. Quick! Show some ardor!

RAGUE. [*flourishing one of the coach lamps.*] Each lantern is a tiny kitchen larder.

CYRANO. [*whispering to CHRISTIAN as they spread the cloth, together.*]
A word with thee, before Roxane has hers!

RAGUE. [*more and more lyrical, cracking his whip.*] No cracker, but an Arlesne sausage, sirs!

ROXANE. [*pouring wine and serving.*]
Since we must die for all, 'tis fair, you see,
To feast for all, Cadets of Gascony.
If the Count comes, let's offer him no share.
[*Going from one to another.*]
There still is time. . . . Don't eat so fast . . . There, there!

A little wine? You weep! Why?

1ST CADET. . . . I am fed!

ROXANE. Tut . . . Red or white wine?
Hand the Captain bread.
A knife! Your plate! A bit of crust? I'll pour you
Champagne? Ah, just this wing? Please!

CYRANO. [*who follows her, his arms piled high, helping her serve, aside.*] I adore you!

ROXANE. [*going toward CHRISTIAN.*]
You?

CHRISTIAN. Nothing!

ROXANE. This biscuit? Muscatelle,—
Two fingers?

CHRIS. Tell me why you came?

ROXANE. I'll tell

You presently. These poor lads need me now.

LE BRET. [*who has gone back, to reach the sentinel on the rampart with half a loaf of bread impaled on his lance.*] The Count of Guiche!

CYRANO. Hide the game-basket, flagon, platter, dish!

Quick! Now, look innocent. No trace of food!

[*To RAGUENEAU.*] Climb to thy seat. All's hid?

[*In the twinkling of an eye, the food is thrust under tent flaps, stuffed into doublets; under capes; into hats. The COUNT OF GUICHE enters hastily, and stops suddenly, sniffing the air. Silence.*]

SCENE VII.

[*The Same; the COUNT OF GUICHE.*]

GUICHE. Something smells good.

A CADET. [*humming with an absent-minded air.*] To lo lo . . .

GUICHE. [*looking at him critically.*]
What ails you? You look red.

THE CADET. Me? Scent of battle.
Joy goes to my head.

ANOTHER. . . . Poup . . . poup . . .
poup . . .

GUICHE. [*turning.*] What's that?

THE CADET. [*a little affected by the wine.*] That's a ballade,
A little . . .

GUICHE. You are strangely gay,
my lad.

THE CADET. Approach of danger.

GUICHE. [*calling CARBON OF CASTEL-JALOUX to give an order.*]
Captain . . .
[*He is arrested by CARBON's appearance.*] Damn my soul,
You look well, too.

CARBON. [*flushed, and hiding a bottle behind him, with an evasive gesture.*] Oh . . .

GUICHE. I ordered them to roll
A cannon yonder . . . 'Tis a surplus
one.

Your men may find a use for such a gun.

A CADET. [*bowing profoundly.*] Charming solicitude!

ANOTHER. [*smiling graciously upon him.*] Oh, sweet attention!

GUICHE. They are lunatics!

[*Drily.*] It may be well to mention
The danger of recoil.

1ST CADET. Ah, pffft!

GUICHE. [*taking a step toward him, furious.*] If I would soil
My hands . . .

THE CADET. The Gascons' cannon won't recoil.

GUICHE. [*seizing him by the arm.*] You are drunk! On what?

THE CADET. Powder's approaching smell.

GUICHE. [*shrugging his shoulders, pushes him away and goes eagerly to ROXANE.*] Your resolution, Mistress? Deign to tell
You will go.

ROXANE. I stay.

GUICHE. Oh, fly!

ROXANE. No.

GUICHE. Be it so.

Give me a musket.

CARBON. What?

GUICHE. I shall not go.

CYRANO. At last, my lord, you give true courage place.

1ST CADET. Is there a Gascon, underneath his lace?

ROXANE. What?

GUICHE. I'll not quit a lady in such need.

2ND CADET. [*to the first.*] Say, boy! I move we ask him to our feed.
[*All the food reappears as if by magic.*]

GUICHE. [*whose eyes brighten.*] Victuals!

3RD CADET. All doublets sheltered things to eat.

GUICHE. [*mastering himself,—haughtily.*]
You think that I will touch your broken meat?

CYRANO. [*saluting.*] Sir, you progress!

GUICHE. Fastin', I'll carry on.

[*A slight trace of Gascon accent escapes him.*]

1ST CADET. [*exulting.*] Fastin'! The accent!

GUICHE. [*laughing.*] Me?

THE CADET. A Gascon born!
[*They all begin a war dance of delight.*]

CARBON OF CASTEL-JALOUX. [*who has disappeared behind the breastworks for a moment, reappears on the crest.*] I have placed my pikemen, trusty men and true.
[*He points to a line of pikes passing, beyond the ridge.*]

GUICHE. [*to ROXANE, bowing low.*] Will you come with me, for this last review?
[*She takes his hand and they go up toward the breastworks. Everybody doffs his hat and follows.*]

CHRIS. [*going to CYRANO, hurriedly.*] Speak quickly!
[*As ROXANE appears on the crest of the ramparts, the lances disappear, lowered in salute. A cheer arises. She bows.*]

THE PIKEMEN. [*without.*] Vivat!

CHRIS. Tell thy secret, then.

CYRANO. In case Roxane . . .

CHRIS. Well, what?

CYRANO. Should speak again
Of . . . letters . . .

CHRIS. Yes . . .

CYRANO. Don't show thy foolishness,
Being surprised. . . .

CHRIS. At what?

CYRANO. O Lord! I must confess!
It is quite simple . . . I just thought . . . to-day . . .
Seeing her . . . thou hast . . .

CHRIS. Hurry!

CYRANO. Thou hast, I say . . .
Written more often than thou knowest.

CHRIS. What?

CYRANO. Damn it! I swore you'd write! Hast thou forgot?
I wrote for thee,—sometimes not telling thee.

CHRIS. Ah!

CYRANO. It was simple.

CHRIS. But . . . how
could it be?

There's the blockade.

CYRANO. Oh, before dawn . . .
I knew

A place to cross their . . .

CHRIS. [*crossing his arms on his
breast.*] That was simple too?

How often did I write? Each week?

Twice? Thrice?

Four times?

CYRANO. More.

CHRIS. Every day?

CYRANO. Why . . . each
day . . . twice.

CHRIS. [*violently.*] And they so
moved thee,—were so strong to
stir,

They made thee face death . . . ?

CYRANO. [*seeing ROXANE, who comes
down.*]

'Sh. Not before her!

[*He hurriedly re-enters his tent.*]

SCENE VIII.

[*ROXANE, CHRISTIAN; in the back-
ground, passing and repassing,
the CADETS; GUICHE and CARBON
OF CASTEL-JALOUX, who give
orders.*]

ROXANE. [*running to CHRISTIAN.*]
Christian! Oh, now . . .

CHRIS. [*taking her hands in his.*]
And now, oh tell me why

Thou camest . . . found the bold-
ness to defy

The cruel road, the ranks of rowdy
reiters,

And come to me. Ah, why?

ROXANE. It was . . .
the letters!

CHRIS. Thou sayst . . . ?

ROXANE. Thy letters made me
reckless, bold;

They made me face these perils
manifold.

Ah, think how many you have sent,
my love,

Always more beautiful.

CHRIS. Could letters move
Thee so? . . .

ROXANE. Thou knowest not
their power.

I have adored thee since that magic
hour

Under my window, when a new voice
cried

And showed the soul thou wast so
fain to hide.

Ah, well,—thy letters for a month
all breathe

The sweetness of that night,—the
jasmine wreath

—The enfolding tenderness! My
lover,—see,

I could not choose but come! Penel-
ope

Would not have tarried at her tapes-
try

Had Lord Ulysses writ, as thou to
me.

She would have tossed her woollen
balls aside,

And sped, like Helen, to her lover's
side!

CHRIS. But . . .

ROXANE. I read and read again. Joy
mixed with grief;

I was with thee. And every written
leaf

Was like a petal wafted from thy
soul;—

Each word, a flame;—a living fire,
the whole,

Of love, sincere and strong!

CHRIS. Strong? . . . And sincere?
That could be felt, Roxane?

ROXANE. Ah, yes, my dear!

CHRIS. And so you came. . . .

ROXANE. I came! (Christian, my
king,

My love, you'd lift me up if I should
fling

Myself low at your feet. So there I
lay

My soul which always at your feet
shall stay.)

I come to seek thy pardon. (Meet
and right

To ask forgiveness, having death in
sight!)

That at the first, in my frivolity,

I loved thy beauty, so insulting thee.

CHRIS. [*horrified.*] Ah, Roxane!

ROXANE. Later, learning greater things,
—A bird that flutters, ere it trusts
its wings—

Thy beauty bound me, and thy
spirit drew.

I loved thee, then, for both.

CHRIS. And now? Speak true!

ROXANE. Ah, now thyself thyself has
overthrown.

At last I love thee for thy soul
alone!

CHRIS. [*starting back.*] Ah! Roxane!

ROXANE. So, be happy. To be loved
For fleshly garments that can be re-
moved,

To a great spirit were a conquest
mean.

I have forgot thy face, thy soul
being seen.

Thy beauty won me. . . . It is all
forgot!

I see thee better,—and I see thee not.

CHRIS. Oh!

ROXANE. Dost thou doubt a triumph
so complete?

CHRIS. [*dolorously.*] Roxane!

ROXANE. I know! Is such a love too
sweet

For thy belief?

CHRIS. I do not want such love!

I want to be loved just for . . .

ROXANE. Just to prove
All women love alike a handsome
face?

Mourn not the old love! Give a
better, place!

CHRIS. The old love was the best.

ROXANE. Nay, nay, I tell
Now I love better,—now I first love
well!

'Tis what thy soul has built that I
adore.

Less beautiful . . .

CHRIS. Hush!

ROXANE. I should love thee more!
Though all thy beauty in the flesh
were gone . . .

CHRIS. Oh, don't say that!

ROXANE. Nay, but I must say on!

CHRIS. Ugly?

ROXANE. I swear it!

CHRIS. God!

ROXANE. Is joy so great?

CHRIS. [*in a choking voice.*] Yes . . .

ROXANE. What ails thee?

CHRIS. Naught. A word to someone.
Wait.

ROXANE. But . . .

CHRIS. [*pointing to a group of CADETS
in the background.*]

I took thee from them,—and they
need thee so,—

Thy smile to light their dying,
Roxane,—Go!

ROXANE. [*deeply moved.*] Dear Chris-
tian!

[*She goes toward the
Gascons, who respect-
fully crowd around her.*]

SCENE IX.

[CHRISTIAN, CYRANO; *in the back-
ground, ROXANE talking gaily
to CARBON and some of the
CADETS.*]

CHRIS. [*toward CYRANO's tent.*]
Cyrano?

CYRANO. [*comes out, equipped for the
approaching battle.*]

Thou art pale. What moves
Thee, lad?

CHRIS. She doesn't love me!

CYRANO. What!

CHRIS. 'Tis thee she loves.

CYRANO. No.

CHRIS. She only loves my soul!

CYRANO. No!

CHRIS. Yes, sir!
'Tis thee she loves, . . . and thou,
thou lovest her!

CYRANO. I?

CHRIS. I know it.

CYRANO. Truth.

CHRIS. To madness.

CYRANO. More.

CHRIS. God His grace,

Tell her!

CYRANO. No!

CHRIS. Why, why not?

CYRANO. Look at my face!

CHRIS. She would love me ugly!

CYRANO. She said that?

CHRIS. Just that.

CYRANO. Ah, I am glad that she could tell you that!

But don't believe this madness. It is naught.

—God! I am glad that she has had that thought—

—Could say that!—But go, lad, for words are light.

Don't become plain. She'd owe me much despite.

CHRIS. I am going to see!

CYRANO. No!

CHRIS. —Learn what she really meant. Thou shalt tell her all.

CYRANO. Oh, not this punishment!

CHRIS. I, kill thy happiness,—because I come

To earth well-favoured?

CYRANO. Put thine in the tomb, I,—being favoured by this circumstance

I can express . . . what thou canst feel, perchance?

CHRIS. Tell her.

CYRANO. He tempts me still, the devil or his elf!

CHRIS. I am tired of being rival to myself!

CYRANO. Christian!

CHRIS. Our secret union scarce exists,

—If we live, can be broken . . .

CYRANO. He persists!

CHRIS. I will be loved myself, or not at all.

We've got to see. Stay here. I am going to call

Roxane. Then I'll walk to the end Of the guard-station. Speak to her, my friend.

I shall return. And so, at last, we'll know

Which of us two.

CYRANO. 'Tis thou!

CHRIS. But . . . I hope so.

[He calls.] Roxane!

CYRANO. No! No!

ROXANE. [running.] What?

CHRIS. Cyrano will say Something you ought to hear.

[She goes eagerly to CYRANO.

CHRISTIAN goes out.]

SCENE X.

[ROXANE, CYRANO; later, LE BRET, CARBON OF CASTEL-JALOUX, the CADETS, RAGUENEAU, the COUNT OF GUICHE, etc.]

ROXANE. Something? . . .

CYRANO. [wildly.] He's gone away!

[To ROXANE.] Nothing. He gives

. . . You know him, so you know

He gives importance to just nothing.

ROXANE. Oh!

He doubts what I have told him? I could see . . .

CYRANO. [taking her hand.] Roxane, was what you told him verity?

ROXANE. Yes, I would love him were he . . . [She hesitates.]

CYRANO. [smiling sorrowfully.] You are fain

To shirk that word . . .

ROXANE. But . . .

CYRANO. It will not give me pain.

Even ugly?

ROXANE. Even ugly!

[A sound of musket fire, without.]

Hark! We are stormed!

CYRANO. [ardently.] Frightful?

ROXANE. Frightful.

CYRANO. Even deformed?

ROXANE. Deformed.

CYRANO. Grotesque?

ROXANE. Never grotesque to me.

CYRANO. You would love him still?

ROXANE. And still more ardently!

CYRANO. [aside, madly.] My God!

'Tis true! And happiness has come!

[Aloud, to ROXANE.] Listen, Roxane . . .

LE BRET. [entering hastily and speaking in a whisper.] Cyrano!

CYRANO. [turning.] Hein?

LE BRET. [putting his finger on his lips.] Be dumb.

[He speaks a few words in a whisper.]

CYRANO. [letting go of ROXANE's hand and uttering a cry.] Ah!

ROXANE. What troubles you?

CYRANO. [stupefied; aside.] 'Tis finished!

[*New volleys of musketry and detonation of artillery.*]

ROXANE. Firing! The din! The reek
Of smoke!

[*She goes up to see what is taking place.*]

CYRANO. Aye, it is finished. I can
never speak!

ROXANE. [*trying to press forward.*]
What passes?

CYRANO. [*holding her back.*] Nothing!
[*The CADETS enter, carrying something which they conceal from ROXANE, standing closely in a group about this burden.*]

ROXANE. These men . . . ?

CYRANO. [*leading her aside.*] Come
away?

ROXANE. What were you going to say?
CYRANO. I . . . going to say?

Nothing. I swear it. I abjure the
whole.

[*Solemnly.*] I swear that Christian's
spirit, that his soul . . .

Was . . .

[*He catches himself, terrified.*] is
. . . the noblest . . .

ROXANE. Was?

[*With a wild cry.*] Ah!

[*She rushes forward, scattering the group that tries to intercept her.*]

CYRANO. It is done!

ROXANE. [*seeing CHRISTIAN, lying on his cloak.*] Christian!

LE BRET. [*to CYRANO.*] Their first shot
. . . and the only one.

[*ROXANE throws herself on CHRISTIAN'S body. There is renewed firing. Clank of arms. Rattle of guns. Drums.*]

CARBON OF CASTEL-JALOUX. [*sword in hand.*] 'Tis the attack.

To arms!

[*Followed by the CADETS, he goes over the top of the breastworks.*]

ROXANE. Christian!

VOICE OF CARBON. [*beyond the fortifications.*] Double time!

ROXANE. Christian!

CARBON. Fall in!

ROXANE. Christian!

CARBON. Measure! Prime!

[*RAGUENEAU has run in, carrying water in a helmet.*]

CHRIS. [*in a dying voice.*] Roxane!

CYRANO. [*quick and low in CHRISTIAN'S ear, while ROXANE frantically tears a bit of linen from her breast and dampens it in the water RAGUENEAU has brought.*] 'Tis thee she loves, thee only!

She has said!

[*CHRISTIAN closes his eyes.*]

ROXANE. Ah, what, my love?

CARBON. Ramrods!

ROXANE. [*to CYRANO.*] He is not . . .
dead?

CARBON. Load! Ready! Aim!

ROXANE. Cold, to the touch
His cheek against my own! Cold,
cold to . . .

CARBON. Touch!

ROXANE. A letter here . . .

[*She opens it.*] For me!

CYRANO. [*aside.*] My letter!

CARBON. Fire!

[*Musket fire. Shouts.*]

[*Clash of battle.*]

CYRANO. [*tries to free his hand, which ROXANE clutches, as she kneels.*]

Roxane, they are fighting!

ROXANE. [*clinging to him.*] Pity my
desire,

One moment! He is dead. You knew
his heart!

[*She weeps gently.*] Was he not ex-
quisite,—a soul apart,

Marvelous?

CYRANO. [*standing, head uncovered.*]
Yes, Roxane.

ROXANE. More than words can express
A poet . . . ?

CYRANO. Yes, Roxane.

ROXANE. Pure spirit?

CYRANO. Yes,
Roxane!

ROXANE. A heart profound, beyond
earth's common span,

A soul sublime and charming?

CYRANO. [*earnestly.*] Yes, Roxane!

ROXANE. [*throwing herself on CHRISTIAN'S body.*] He is dead!

CYRANO. [*aside, drawing his sword.*]
I'd die ere day grows dim,

Since all unknowing she mourns me
in him.

[*Trumpets in the distance.*]

THE COUNT OF GUICHE. [*appears on the ramparts, bareheaded, wounded in the forehead; calling in a ringing voice.*] Fanfare of brasses! 'Tis the signal sealed!

The French with food returning to the field!

Hold the line, yet!

ROXANE. . . . Upon his letter, stains,
Blood,—tears!

A VOICE. [*without.*] Surrender!

VOICES OF THE CADETS. No!

RAGUE. [*who has climbed on the coachman's box and is watching the engagement.*] The Spaniard gains!

CYRANO. [*to the COUNT, indicating ROXANE.*] Take her! I am going to charge!

ROXANE. [*kissing the letter and speaking in a faint voice.*]

His letter, sealed

With tears and blood!

RAGUE. [*leaping from his high seat to run to her.*] She's fainting!

GUICHE. [*on the ramparts, to the CADETS, raging.*] Hold hard!

A VOICE. [*without.*] Yield!

VOICES OF CADETS. No!

CYRANO. [*to GUICHE.*] You have proved your valour, sir. Take her away!

GUICHE. [*who runs to ROXANE and lifts her in his arms.*] So be it. Hold them! We have gained the day

If you gain time!

CYRANO. Why, good!

[*Crying out to ROXANE, as the COUNT OF GUICHE, aided by RAGUENEAU, carries her off, fainting.*]

Farewell, Roxane!

[*A deafening din. . . Cries. Tumult. CADETS appear, wounded, falling. CYRANO, rushing to the battle, is arrested on the crest of the earthworks by CASTEL-JALOUX, who is covered with blood.*]

CARBON. We waver! I've two gunshots, partisan.

CYRANO. [*calling to CADETS.*] Hardily, lads! No budging!

[*To CARBON, whom he supports in his arms.*] Have no fear!

I have two deaths to avenge, to-day and here,—

Christian's . . . My happiness!

[*They come down. CYRANO seizes the lance to which is fastened ROXANE's handkerchief.*] Float, little flag!

[*He plants it in the ground, and calls to the CADETS.*]

Rally, boys! Smash them!

[*To the fifer.*] Play! The fife!

[*To the CADETS.*] Don't lag!

[*The fifer plays. The wounded struggle to their feet. The CADETS swarming up the ramparts group themselves around CYRANO and the little flag. The Coach is covered with men; it bristles with arquebuses; it is transformed into a redoubt.*]

A CADET. [*retreating, appears on the crest of the fortifications, still fighting; he cries.*] They climb the ramparts! [*He falls dead.*]

CYRANO. We'll salute our guests!

[*The ramparts are suddenly crowned with terrible ranks of the enemy. The great Imperial standard is raised.*]

CYRANO. Fire!

[*Firing all along the ragged line.*]

ORDERS IN THE ENEMY'S RANKS. Fire!

[*A murderous ripost. The CADETS fall on every side.*]

A SPANISH OFFICER. [*uncovering.*]

What men are these who hug death to their breasts?

CYRANO. [*declaiming, erect amid a storm of lead.*]

These are Gascony's darling Cadets
Of Carbon of Castel-Jaloux;

Brazen braggarts, each man of them
bets . . .

[*He hurls himself forward, followed by a handful of survivors.*]

They are Gascony's darling . . .
 [The rest is lost in the
 tumult of battle.]

[Curtain]

ACT V

CYRANO'S GAZETTE

Fifteen years later. 1665. Park of the Convent occupied by the Ladies of the Cross, at Paris.

Superb shadows. On the Left, the house, with a vast flight of steps, several doors opening upon it.

In the middle of the scene stands a huge tree, solitary in the centre of a little oval space.

On the Right, among tall box trees, a semicircular stone bench.

The background is traversed by a walk overarched by chestnut trees; this leads to a chapel door, Right, seen through the branches of the trees. Beyond the double curtain of these trees, there are glimpses of lawn, more shaded walks, thickets, the reaches of the park; the sky.

A little side door of the chapel opens upon a colonnade engarlanded with reddening Autumn vines. In the Right foreground, this is lost behind the box hedge.

It is Autumn. Above the pure green of the turf, all the leafage is sere and brown.

The evergreen masses of box and yew stand out darkly.

A heap of yellow leaves lies under each tree. Leaves are falling everywhere. They rustle under foot. They half cover the entrance steps and lie on the stone benches.

Between the bench on the Right and the Tree is a tall embroidery frame, in front of which a little sewing chair has been placed.

There are baskets full of silken skeins and woollen balls.

A piece of tapestry begun.

As the curtain rises, the sisters come and go in the park.

Some of them are sitting on the stone bench, around an older nun. The leaves fall always.

SCENE I.

[MOTHER MARGARET, SISTER MARTHA, SISTER CLAIRE, the SISTERS.]

SISTER MARTHA. [to MOTHER MARGARET.] She looked twice—Sister Claire did—in the glass.

To set her cornet straight.

MOTHER MARGARET. [to SISTER CLAIRE.]

That's wrong. Alas!

SISTER CLAIRE. But I saw Sister Martha take a plum

Out of the tart.

MOTHER MARGARET. [to SISTER MARTHA.] Oh, that was ugly.

Come!

SISTER CLAIRE. A little glance!

SISTER MARTHA. The littlest of plums!

MOTHER MARGARET. Sir Cyrano shall hear it when he comes.

SISTER CLAIRE. [dismayed.] No! He would tease us, Mother, if you should!

SISTER MARTHA. "Nuns are so vain,"

SISTER CLAIRE. "So greedy,"

MOTHER MARGARET. [smiling.] "And so good."

SISTER CLAIRE. Is it true, Mother Margaret, of Jesus,

He has come these ten years . . . ?

MOTHER MARGARET. More than that.

He sees us

Each week since first his cousin came to wear

Her sable mourning midst our linen fair,

Seeking this shelter fourteen years ago,

A stately blackbird midst my birds of snow.

SISTER MARTHA. He only, since she came to be our guest,

Lightens the grief that never quits her breast.

ALL THE SISTERS. He is so droll!

So merry!

He can tell
Such tales! He teases us!
We love him well!
We make him tartlets.

Oh, I love to stick
Them full of plums!
SISTER MARTHA. He's a poor Catholic.
SISTER CLAIRE. We will convert him!
THE SISTERS. Yes! Yes!
MOTHER MARGARET. Children, no.
I must forbid you to torment him so.
He might come less. Remember this
command.

SISTER MARTHA. But . . . God . . .
MOTHER MARGARET. [*tranquilly.*] God
knows him. God will under-
stand.

SISTER MARTHA. But every Saturday
to hear him say,
"Sister, Aha, I ate flesh yesterday."
MOTHER MARGARET. He tells you that?
Well, when he said it last
For two whole days he had not
broken fast.

SISTER MARTHA. Mother!
MOTHER MARGARET. Yes, he is poor.
SISTER MARTHA. Who told you?
MOTHER MARGARET. His good friend,
My lord Le Bret.

SISTER MARTHA. Nobody helps him?
MOTHER MARGARET. None. It would
offend.

[*In a shaded walk in the back-
ground, ROXANE appears,
robed in black and wearing a
widow's cap and long veil.
The COUNT OF GUICHE, mag-
nificent, and aging, walks at
her side. They come down
slowly. MOTHER MARGARET
rises.*]

Let us go in. The Lady Madeleine
Walks in the park with visitors.
SISTER MARTHA. [*whispering to SISTER
CLAIRE.*] I'd fain
Know isn't the Marshal Duke of Gramont?
SISTER CLAIRE. [*looking and nodding.*]
So.
SISTER MARTHA. The last time that he
came was months ago.
SISTER CLAIRE. He is so busy,—court,
—camp . . .
SISTER MARTHA. Worldly care!

[*They go out. GUICHE and
ROXANE come down in silence.
They stop near the tapestry
frame. A pause.*]

SCENE II.

[*ROXANE, the DUKE OF GRAMONT,
once COUNT OF GUICHE; later,
LE BRET, RAGUENEAU.*]

THE DUKE. So you abide here, al-
ways, vainly fair,
Still mourning?

ROXANE. Always.
THE DUKE. Faithful still?

ROXANE. Always.
THE DUKE. [*after a moment's silence.*]
You have pardoned me?

ROXANE. Yes, in this holy place.
[*Silence again falls between them.*]

THE DUKE. Was he in truth a
being . . . ?

ROXANE. Could you know!
THE DUKE. Could I . . . Perhaps I
failed there, long ago.

Still his last letter next your heart is
stored?

ROXANE. Sweet scapulary on this vel-
vet cord.

THE DUKE. Even dead, you love him?

ROXANE. Sometimes, oh, meseems
He is but half dead. Through my
life it beams,

His living love, a shelter, a caress.

THE DUKE. [*after another interval of
silence.*] Cyrano come to see
you?

ROXANE. Often, yes.
This old friend takes the place of
my gazettes.

—And is as regular. A Sister sets
His armchair where you stand, be-
neath this tree.

I sew, and wait. The hour strikes.
There will be

—I do not even turn my head!—his
cane

Upon the steps. He sits down, mocks
again

My endless tapestry; then day by
day

Gives the weeks' chronicle.

[*LE BRET appears on the steps.*] Ah,
see! Le Bret!

[LE BRET *comes down.*] How fares our friend?

LE BRET. Ill.

THE DUKE. Oh!

ROXANE. [*to the DUKE.*] Exaggerated!

LE BRET. I told him so! Abandoned, poor, and hated,—

Still his epistles make new enemies.
He fights the world entire,—hypoc-
risies.—

Pietists,—plagiarists,—all earthly error.

ROXANE. Always his sword inspires such mortal terror

No man will face it. He is safe.

THE DUKE. [*shaking his head.*] Who knows?

LE BRET. I fear not men but those more subtle foes,

Solitude, Famine, graying gaunt December,

Entering with wolfish tread his dismal chamber.

By these assassins deadliest blows are dealt.

—Each day he takes a hole up in his belt.

His poor big nose looks like old ivory.
One thin black suit of serge on earth has he.

THE DUKE. Not Fortune's favourite, truly, but—Gadzook!

Pity him not too much.

LE BRET. [*with a bitter smile.*] My Lord, the Duke . . .

THE DUKE. Pity him not too much! Unbound by pacts,

He keeps his freedom,—thoughts no less than acts.

LE BRET. Lord Marshall . . .

THE DUKE. [*haughtily.*] Yes, he has naught; I, all;—I understand,—

Yet I were very fain to take his hand.

[*Bowing to ROXANE.*] Good-bye.

ROXANE. Let me conduct you . . .

[*The DUKE bows to LE BRET and with ROXANE walks towards the steps.*]

THE DUKE. . . . Envious . . . Yes! Sometimes, when one has made his life's success,

One feels,—not finding, God knows, much amiss,—

A thousand small distastes, whose sum is this;

Not quite remorse, but an obscure disorder.

One's ducal robes drag always on this border,

While on life's stair a mounting foot one sets,

A stir of lost illusions, dry regrets,
As, while you mount these steps, the ear perceives

Your robes of mourning rustle dying leaves.

ROXANE. [*ironically.*] You,—become dreamer?

THE DUKE. Eh . . . Yes!

[*As he is going out, he turns abruptly.*]

[*To ROXANE.*] With your consent . . . One word.

[*He goes to LE BRET and speaks in a low voice.*]

True, no one dares to meet him, yet I've heard

How many hate your friend. And yesterday

I caught this bit, at Court,—we were at play,—

"An accident might kill this Cyrano."

LE BRET. Ah?

THE DUKE. Bid him keep close at home . . . be prudent.

LE BRET. [*raising his arms to heaven.*] Oh!

Prudent! I'll go to warn him, but . . .

ROXANE. [*who has remained on the steps, to a SISTER who comes to her.*] What is it?

THE SISTER. May Ragueneau see you, Madame?

ROXANE. Yes.

[*To the DUKE and LE BRET.*]

This visit

Will be a tale of woe. Once on a time

Ragueneau was poet. Since that rôle sublime

He has been . . .

LE BRET. . . . Beadle . . .

ROXANE. . . . Actor . . .

LE BRET. . . . Bath-house-man . . .

ROXANE. Wig-maker . . .

LE BRET. Archlute teacher . . .

ROXANE. What new plan

Brings him to-day?

RAGUE. [*enters precipitately.*]

Madam . . .

[*He sees LE BRET.*] Sir . . . !

ROXANE. [*smiling.*] Recount your woes
To him. I shall return.

RAGUE. But Madam . . .

[*ROXANE does not hear him; she goes out with the DUKE. RAGUENEAU goes down to LE BRET.*]

SCENE III.

[*LE BRET, RAGUENEAU.*]

RAGUE. I suppose

You being here, it's best she shouldn't know.

—I went to see your friend a while ago.

Not twenty spaces from his house, I spied

Him coming out. I meant to reach his side.

He turned the corner, and I ran. A glance

Showed from a window . . . accident,—perchance,—

A lackey dropped a heavy chunk of wood.

LE BRET. The cowards! Cyrano!

RAGUE. I came . . . I stood . . .

LE BRET. Oh!

RAGUE. By our friend, our poet. Running red

Upon the ground, blood streamed from his poor head.

LE BRET. He is . . . dead?

RAGUE. No, but . . . God! I got him home,—

Lord! what a place for such a man to come.

LE BRET. He suffers?

RAGUE. No, no, sir . . . He didn't wake.

LE BRET. A leech? . . .

RAGUE. One came, sir, for sweet pity's sake.

LE BRET. Oh, my poor Cyrano! We must not tell

Roxane too suddenly. This doctor . . . ?

RAGUE. Well,

He talked . . . of fever . . . and of meninges . . .

—Oh, his poor head in linen bandages!

Come! Let us run! His pillow's all untended,

And if he tries to move . . . then all is ended.

LE BRET. [*leading him to the right.*] This way is shortest . . . by the chapel . . . See.

ROXANE. [*appearing on the steps and seeing LE BRET disappearing by the colonnade which leads to the side door of the chapel.*] My lord Le Bret!

[*LE BRET and RAGUENEAU run on, without answering.*]

Dear me!

Our Ragueneau must have a woeful story.

[*She comes down the steps.*]

SCENE IV.

[*ROXANE, alone: later, two SISTERS for a moment.*]

ROXANE. September's closing day is full of glory.

My sadness smiles. April too dazzling beams.

Autumn more gently blends with wistful dreams.

[*She sits down to her embroidery. Two SISTERS coming out of the house carry a large armchair and put it under the big tree.*] Here is the classic armchair, where shall rest

My old friend.

SISTER MARTHA. It's the parlour's very best.

ROXANE. Thank you, my Sister.

[*The SISTERS go out.*]

He comes . . . The hour sounds . . .

—My skeins.—The hour has struck. Nay, this astounds—

What! For the first time will he now be late?

My thimble . . . There! . . . The
Sister at the gate
Must be exhorting him . . .
[*Time passes.*] Past all belief.
. . . He'll not delay . . . Hist! No
. . . a falling leaf.

[*She brushes away a
dead leaf that has
fallen on her work.*]

. . . My scissors? In my bag!
What holds him back?

Nothing could keep . . .

A SISTER. [*appearing on the steps.*]
My lord of Bergerac.

SCENE V.

[ROXANE, CYRANO, and for a moment,
SISTER MARTHA.]

ROXANE. [*without turning.*] What did
I say?

[*She works at her tapes-
try. CYRANO, very pale,
his plumed hat pulled
down over his eyes, enters.
The SISTER who an-
nounced him disappears.
He begins to come down
the steps, slowly and
making an evident effort
to hold himself erect.
He bears heavily on his
cane. ROXANE works
diligently.*]

Tut! This shade appears

Too light . . . 'tis faded.

[*To CYRANO, in a tone of amicable
reproach.*] After fourteen years,

Late, for the first time!

CYRANO. [*who has reached his arm-
chair and sat down, speaking in
a cheerful voice that contrasts
sharply with his appearance.*]

Yes. Lord, I am vexed.

Delayed . . . and bless my soul, on
what pretext!

ROXANE. By . . . ?

CYRANO. By a visitor most
loath to wait.

ROXANE. [*absent-mindedly; working.*]
Unwelcome?

CYRANO. No . . . but too
importunate.

ROXANE. You sent him off?

CYRANO. Yes. I was bold
to say,

"Your pardon but to-day is Satur-
day.

I am expected. 'Tis not in your
power

To make me fail her. Meet me in an
hour!"

ROXANE. [*lightly.*] We'll keep him
waiting if so soon he calls.

I shall not let you go till evening
falls.

CYRANO. It may be, he will not so long
delay.

[*He closes his eyes and
is silent for a moment.*]

SISTER MARTHA crosses
the turf from the Chapel.
She is going toward
the steps.]

ROXANE. [*to CYRANO.*] Not teasing
Sister Martha?

CYRANO. [*starting, and opening his
eyes.*] Yes.

[*Calling in a jocular voice.*] Sister!
Hey!

[*SISTER MARTHA comes softly up.*]

Those pretty eyes still looking at
your feet?

SISTER MARTHA. [*raising her eyes and
smiling.*] But . . .

[*She looks at him and makes a
startled gesture.*] Oh! . . .

CYRANO. [*putting his finger on his lips
and indicating ROXANE.*] 'Sh, it
is nothing.

[*In a loud voice.*] Friday I ate meat.

SISTER MARTHA. I know.

[*Aside.*] That's why he looks so
pale. [*aloud.*] I think

I'll make a hot tisane for you to
drink,

In the refectory. Don't say me nay.
You will come?

CYRANO. Yes, yes.

SISTER MARTHA. Ah, you are
good to-day.

ROXANE. [*who hears them whispering.*]
Is she trying to convert you?

SISTER MARTHA. Oh, so hard
I am trying not to!

CYRANO. Is my saint off guard?

My sermon's missing. Now, here is a wonder!

[*With serio-comic intensity.*]

Now it's my turn to startle you, by thunder!

Hark! I permit you . . .

[*He seems to be searching for a very teasing jest and to have hit upon it.*] —You'll recall it long—

To . . . pray for me to-night at evensong!

ROXANE. Oh, oh!

CYRANO. [*laughing.*] Sister doubts her hearing and her vision.

SISTER MARTHA. [*softly.*] I have not waited, sir, for your permission.

[*She goes out.*]

CYRANO. [*turning once more to ROXANE bent over her work.*] The devil fetch me if I hope to see

That labour finished.

ROXANE. Still that pleasantry!

[*A passing breeze shakes down a shower of leaves.*]

CYRANO. Dead leaves!

ROXANE. Pale golden, all,

Yellow Venetian gold!

CYRANO. How well they fall!

On the short journey from the branch to earth,

Dying they bring one beauty more to birth.

Though dreading dusty death that looms in sight,

They give their fall the loveliness of flight.

ROXANE. You, melancholy?

CYRANO. [*recalling himself, quickly.*]

Roxane! Not at all.

ROXANE. Come, let us leave the dead leaves where they fall,

And talk of news. What new thing have you seen?

Read my Gazette!

CYRANO. Hear.

ROXANE. Ah.

CYRANO. [*who is growing paler and paler and struggling against mortal agony.*] Saturday, nineteen,

After eight helpings of his pet conserve,

A fever seized the King. His leeches serve

Death notice on the traitorous attack. It is repulsed. The royal pulse runs slack.

On Sunday, at the great ball of the Queen,

Seven hundred tapers and three score were seen;

Our troops, they said, met John the Austrian;

They hung four sorcerers. The story ran

Lady Athis' lapdog had a dose and pack.

ROXANE. Ah, hold your tongue, my lord of Bergerac!

CYRANO. On Monday, naught. Lygdamire's changed favourites.

ROXANE. Oh!

CYRANO. Tuesday, the Court repaired to Fontainebleau.

Wednesday, the Monglat told Fiesque nay.

Thursday, Mancini's nearly queen,—they say.

The twenty-fifth, the Monglat quite relented.

The twenty-sixth . . .

[*He closes his eyes. His head falls on his breast. Silence.*]

ROXANE. [*surprised by the silence, turns, looks at him, and rises, in alarm.*] Oh, Heaven! Has he fainted?

[*She runs to him, crying.*] Cyrano!

CYRANO. [*opening his eyes, his voice vague.*] What is it?

Where . . . ?

[*He sees ROXANE bending over him and, hurriedly pressing his hat more firmly down on his forehead, and pulling himself up in his chair with an effort, speaks more clearly.*]

No . . . No . . . I have not swooned . . .

Naught is the matter.

ROXANE. Oh, but . . .

CYRANO. My old wound . . . Of Arras . . . sometimes . . .

Ah . . . you know!

ROXANE. Poor friend!

CYRANO. But it is naught. 'Twill
pass . . .
[*He smiles with an effort.*] It has an
end.

ROXANE. [*standing near him.*] Each
of us wears a wound. My heart
must hold

Always the old wound, that is never
old.

[*She puts her hand on her heart.*]
Here, 'neath his letter. You have
understood!

That yellowing page, still stained
with tears and blood.

[*Twilight begins to fall.*]

CYRANO. His letter. You have said
. . . perhaps some day,

You would let me read it.

ROXANE. . . . Read his letter?

CYRANO. . . . Pray

You . . . to-day . . . I would . . .

ROXANE. [*giving him the little bag,
from the cord.*] Take it.

CYRANO. . . . You bid me?
I . . .

ROXANE. Open it. Read.

[*She goes back to her
work, and begins to sort
and fold the silks.*]

CYRANO. [*reading.*] "Roxane, farewell.
I am about to die."

ROXANE. [*pausing, astonished.*] Aloud?

CYRANO. . . . "This evening as
I think, beloved;

My soul, weighed down with love
untold, unproved,

And I am dying. Never more, in-
deed,

My dazzled eyes shall quaff . . .

ROXANE. . . . Ah, how you read
His letter!

CYRANO. [*reading.*] "Quaff your
beauty's wine.

Nor kiss, in flight, your gestures, all
divine.

I see again one that so charmed my
eye,

You touch your lovely brow. I
strive to cry . . .

ROXANE. How you read it . . . this
letter!

CYRANO. "So you may hear,
Farewell!"

ROXANE. You read it . . .

CYRANO. "O my dear, my dear,
My treasure."

ROXANE. In a voice . . .

CYRANO. "My love!"

ROXANE. Whose chime
Rings in my heart . . . and not for
the first time!

[*She comes near, very quietly.
Unseen, she goes behind the
armchair, and leaning silently
above him, she looks at the
letter. The shadows deepen.*]

CYRANO. "My heart will never leave
you, O my dear!

I am . . . will be on whatsoever
sphere,

Always your lover, O my heart's one
light."

ROXANE. [*touching him gently on the
shoulder.*] How can you read
this letter? It is night.

[*He trembles, turns, sees her
near him, makes a startled
gesture; bows his head. A
long silence. Then, in the
deep shadows that have fallen,
she says slowly, clasping
her hands.*]

For fourteen years he has played out
this part,

Being the old friend, come to cheer
my heart!

CYRANO. Roxane!

ROXANE. 'Twas you!

CYRANO. No, Roxane!

ROXANE. Why disclaim?

I should have known it when he
spoke my name!

CYRANO. It was not I!

ROXANE. 'Twas you!

CYRANO. No! No! I vow . . . !

ROXANE. Generous imposture! I per-
ceive it now . . .

The letters,—yours!

CYRANO. . . . No!

ROXANE. Yours each dear,
mad word!

Yours!

CYRANO. No!

ROXANE. And yours the voice
that magic night I heard!

CYRANO. I swear, not mine!

ROXANE. And your soul
called to me . . .

CYRANO. I did not love . . .
 ROXANE. You loved me!
 CYRANO. It was he!
 ROXANE. You loved me!
 CYRANO. No.
 ROXANE. You whisper! I have
 moved you!
 CYRANO. O my dear love, I never,
 never loved you!
 ROXANE. How many things are dead!
 What life appears!
 Ah, why have you been silent four-
 teen years?
 When it was all your letter,—even
 this,
 The stain of tears!
 CYRANO. [*holding the letter out to her.*]
 Aye,—but the blood was his.
 ROXANE. Then why permit this silence
 so sublime
 To end to-day?
 CYRANO. Why?

[*LE BRET and RAGUENEAU enter-
 ing, running.*]

SCENE VI.

[*The Same; LE BRET and RAGUENEAU.*]

LE BRET. . . . It was fully time
 We found . . . I knew we'd find him
 here!
 CYRANO. [*smiling, and trying to sit
 more erect.*] Is that so odd?
 LE BRET. He has killed himself by
 coming!
 ROXANE. Gracious God!
 The weakness . . . the half swoon
 . . . Dear God!
 And yet . . .
 CYRANO. 'Tis true, I had not finished
 my Gazette.
 Died, Saturday the twenty-sixth, the
 hour not stated,
 My lord of Bergerac, assassinated.
 [*He lifts his hat. His
 head is seen covered with
 linen bandages.*]
 ROXANE. What says he? Cyrano!
 This bandaged head!
 Oh, what? . . .

CYRANO. "The only noble weapon," so
 I said . . .
 "A knightly foeman," . . . and "on
 glory's field."
 —The fullness of Fate's mockery re-
 vealed,
 Here am I, killed from ambush where
 I stood,
 By a hid lackey, with a block of
 wood.
 Well done! I have missed in all
 things, even in Death.
 RAGUE. Ah, sir . . .
 CYRANO. Don't weep, old friend,
 with shuddering breath.
 [*He holds out his hand to him.*]
 What hast thou now become, my poet
 brother?
 RAGUE. [*through his tears.*] I'm . . .
 candle snuffer . . . at . . . Mo-
 lière's . . . I smother
 The . . . lights . . .
 CYRANO. Molière's!
 RAGUE. But I shall quit
 to-morrow.
 They played *Scapin* last night, and
 stooped to borrow
 One of your scenes entire. I saw!
 LE BRET. I, too.
 RAGUE. The famous "What the devil
 would he do?"
 LE BRET. Molière has filched it.
 CYRANO. Tut! tut!
 He does well.
 It ought to take, that scene. And *did*
 it tell?
 RAGUE. [*sobbing.*] Oh, Sir, they
 laughed and laughed!
 CYRANO. My part is yet
 To be the prompter whom all men
 forget.
 [*To ROXANE.*] Think of the bal-
 cony, the dusk-sweet air,
 And Christian speaking. All my life
 is there;
 I, telling in the dark my yearning
 story,
 While others climb to take the kiss
 of glory!
 At the tomb's edge, Fate's justice I
 declare,
 Molière has genius,—Christian was
 so fair!
 [*The chapel bells have rung.*]

*And in the background along
the shaded walks the SISTERS
are seen, going to Even-song.]*

CYRANO. Let them go pray. For now
the hour is near.

ROXANE. [*rising to call.*] Sister! Oh,
Sister!

CYRANO. No, call no one here.
Ere you come back, I should have
gone away.

*[The nuns enter the chapel.
The organ is heard.]*

I longed for harmony to end my day.

ROXANE. I love you! Live!

CYRANO. In fairy tales,
long since,

The princess said that, and the ugly
prince

Lost all his plainness in that sudden
sun.

But, see! I finish as I was begun.

ROXANE. I made your grief, I, I!

CYRANO. You made my bliss.

I lacked all woman's kindness, . . .
even this . . .

My mother found me ugly. And I
had

No sister. Lest they mock an ugly
lad,

I shunned all women. You became
my friend.

One soft gown brushed my path be-
fore the end.

LE BRET. [*showing him the moonlight
that filters through the
branches.*] Thy other love!

CYRANO. [*smiling at the moon.*] Wel-
come, fair friend above!

ROXANE. I loved but once, and twice
I lose my love!

CYRANO. [*to LE BRET.*] I'll journey to
that moonland opaline,

Unhampered,—eh, Le Bret?—by a
machine.

ROXANE. What are you saying?

CYRANO. I shall have one prize.
They'll let me have the moon for
paradise.

In yonder sphere, we shall hold con-
verse high,

Galileo, and Socrates and I.

LE BRET. [*suddenly rebellious.*] No!

No! It is too stupid, too unjust!

A hero and a poet in the dust!

To die! and so to die!

CYRANO. Le Bret, who scolds!

LE BRET. [*bursting into uncontrollable
sobbing.*] Woe's me!

My friend! My friend!

CYRANO. [*standing erect, his eyes rov-
ing.*] Cadets of Gascony!

The elementary mass . . . the *hic*
falls thus.

LE BRET. Still science, though he
rave . . .

CYRANO. Copernicus

Said . . .

ROXANE. Oh!

CYRANO. "What the devil
would he do.

And what a plague was his business
to?"

Physicist and dreamer . . . these,
Rhymer, musician, fighter an it please,
And sailor of aerial seas;
Swordsman whose parry was attack;
Lover, lacking all love's keys;
Here he lies, this Hercules
Savien Cyrano Bergerac,—
All and nothing. Rest in peace.

I cry your pardon. I cannot delay.

This moonbeam comes to light me on
my way.

*[He falls back into the
chair. ROXANE's tears re-
call him to reality; he
looks at her, and, caress-
ing the folds of her veil.]*

Ah, I would have you mourn him
never less,

This beautiful, brave Christian! Yet
'twould bless

My passing, warm the coldness of
my tomb,

If in your mourning both of us
found room.

If in your veils, I had a little share!

ROXANE. I swear to you . . .

CYRANO. [*seized with deadly trembling,
rises with sudden violence.*] No!

No! Not in a chair!

[They spring to his side.]

Let no man hold me up. None!

[He leans against the tree.] Save
this tree. *[Silence.]*

He comes. With marble I am shod.

And, see,

I am gloved with lead.

[*He draws himself erect.*] So here I
make my stand.

[*He draws his sword.*] I'll meet him
on my feet, and sword in hand!

LE BRET. Cyrano!

ROXANE. Cyrano!

[*They all start back, affrighted.*]

CYRANO. Your presumption grows!
Featureless Death, thou art leering
at my nose!

[*He lifts his sword.*]

How say you? Is it futile? Futile,
yes!

Man does not battle only for success!

Nay! It is nobler if it be in vain!

Who are ye? Thousands, rushing in
amain!

I know ye now,—mine ancient ene-
mies!

Lies! Prejudice!

[*He lays about him with his sword.*]

Ah, Hypocrisies!

Compromise! Cowardice!

Surrender? I?

Never! Ah, never! Thou, Stupid-
ity!

I know I shall be beaten by your
might.

What matters it! I fight! I fight!
I fight!

[*He sweeps a great circle with
his sword and stops, pant-
ing.*]

Yes, you take all, the laurel with the
rose.

Take them! One thing I have
guarded to the close.

I'll make obeisance to my God this
night,

Sweep the blue threshold of immortal
light,

With that you may not touch. Let
none presume!

[*He lifts his sword high.*]

Stainless, unbent, I have kept . . .

[*His sword falls from his
hand; he shudders and
falls into the arms of LE
BRET and RAGUENEAU.*]

ROXANE. [*bending over him and kissing
his forehead.*]

Ah! What?

CYRANO. [*opens his eyes, knows her
and smiles.*] My plume!

[*Curtain.*]

THE ASSUMPTION OF HANNELE *

A DREAM POEM

GERHART HAUPTMANN

Translated by Charles Henry Meltzer

CHARACTERS

HANNELE.
GOTTWALD (*afterwards THE STRANGER*), a
Schoolmaster.
SISTER MARTHA, a Deaconess.
TULPE
HETE (HEDWIG) } *Inmates of an Almshouse.*
PLESCHKE
HANKE
SEIDEL, a Woodcutter.
BERGER, a Magistrate.
SCHMIDT, a Police Official.
DR. WACHLER.

APPARITIONS INTRODUCED DURING HANNELE'S DELIRIUM

MATTERN (*a Mason*), supposed to be HAN-
NELE'S Father.
THE FORM OF HANNELE'S DEAD MOTHER.
A GREAT DARK ANGEL.
THREE ANGELS OF LIGHT.
THE DEACONESS.
THE STRANGER.
GOTTWALD'S PUPILS.
PLESCHKE.
HANKE AND OTHER PAUPERS.
SEIDEL.
A VILLAGE DOCTOR.
FOUR YOUTHS, CLAD IN WHITE.
NUMEROUS BRIGHT ANGELS, GREAT AND
SMALL.
MOURNERS.
WOMEN, ETC.

[DEDICATION]

To my wife
MARIE
Born Thienemann

Children pluck red clover, pluck out the
blossoms carefully and suck the pale, fine

* From *The Dramatic Works of Gerhart Hauptmann*, Volume 4; copyright, 1914, by B. W. Huebsch.

stems. A faint sweetness comes to their
tongues. If you can get even as much sweet-
ness out of my poem, I shall not be ashamed
of my gift.

Gerhart

ACT I

A room in the almshouse of a village
in the mountains. Bare walls. A door
at center, back. To the left of this door
is a small window. Before the window
are a rickety table and a bench. Near
the table and to the left of it is a stove.
To the right of the door is a pallet with
a straw mattress and a few ragged
coverlets.

It is a stormy December evening.
At the table, seated and singing a hymn
which she reads from a hymn book,
by the light of a tallow candle, sits
TULPE, an old, ragged pauper.

[The stage directions as to "right"
and "left" are given from the
actor's standpoint.]

TULPE. [*sings in a cracked, quaver-
ing voice.*]

"Jesus, lover of my soul,
Let me to Thy bosom fly,
While the waves of trouble . . ."

[Enter HEDWIG, familiarly known
as HETE, a disreputable woman
of about thirty, with curly hair.
Round her head is wrapped a
thick cloth. She carries a bundle
under her arm. Her dress is
light and shabby.]

HETE. [*blowing on her fingers.*]
Mercy on us, nice weather we're havin'.

[drops her bundle on the table and goes on blowing her fingers, standing alternately on each of her feet, which are shod in worn-out old boots.] We ain't had such weather for an age.

TULPE. What have yer got in there?

HETE. [grinning and whining with pain, sits on the bench by the stove and tries to take off her boots.] Oh, Lord! My blessed toes are just burnin'!

TULPE. [unties HETE's bundle, in which are seen a loaf, a packet of chicory, a bag of coffee, a few pairs of stockings, etc.] Ain't there nothin' for me in your bundle?

HETE. [at first too busy with her boots to mind TULPE; suddenly snatches at the bundle and collects its contents.] Tulpe! [one of HETE's feet is bare; she piles her belongings together and carries them off to the pallet.] Now you'd best leave my things alone—D'you think I've been trampin' about and freezin' all the bones in my body for you, eh?

TULPE. Ah, yer needn't make such a fuss about it, you fool! [rises, closes her hymn book, and wipes it carefully with her skirt.] I don't want none of the rubbish you've been beggin' for.

HETE. [hiding her property under the mattress.] Beggin'? I'd like to know who's done most beggin'—you or me! You've done nothin' else all your life. And you're no chicken, neither.

TULPE. Don't you fly out about it. We know the sort er life you've led. Pastor told you what he thought of you, he did. I didn't tramp about the streets when I was a girl. I was respect'ble.

HETE. I s'pose that's why you were sent to jail!

TULPE. You'll get there fast enough, don't you fear, my beauty. Just you let me get a sight of a gendarme, that's all. I could tell him a thing or two about you, 's sure's yer live!

HETE. Oh, shut up! I don't care for your gendarmes. Let 'em come and see if I don't tell 'em somethin' as'll make you feel uncomf'ble.

TULPE. Yer can't say nothin' against me!

HETE. Oh, I can't, can't I? Who stole the overcoat from the innkeeper's little boy, eh? [TULPE makes as though to spit at HETE.] That's what you call manners, I s'pose? Yer shan't have nothin' now, just to spite yer.

TULPE. Ah, go on! I wouldn't take anythin' from the likes er you, anyhow.

HETE. No, and you won't get nothin'.

[PLESCHKE and HANKE appear outside the open door, against which they have been literally blown by the howling wind. PLESCHKE, a scrofulous, childish old man, in rags, bursts out laughing. HANKE, a good-for-nothing black-guard, blasphemes. They are seen to shake the snow off their hats and cloaks. Each carries a bundle.]

PLESCHKE. Lord, how it do blow! One er these 'ere nights, you see if the old shanty ain't smashed to bits!

[At sight of the newcomers, HETE hurriedly drags her bundle from beneath the mattress, picks it up and runs past the men into the courtyard and up a flight of stairs.]

PLESCHKE. [calling after HETE.] Hey! Hulloo! Yer in a hurry! Wot are yer runnin' away fur? We won't hurt yer, will we, Hanke?

TULPE. [busy at the stove with a saucepan.] Oh, she ain't right in her head. She thinks you'll steal her bundle.

PLESCHKE. [enters.] Lord save us! That's rough on us, that is! Evenin'! Good Lord, what weather! Hang me if I wasn't a'most blown off my feet!

[Limps to the table, lays his bundle down, and wags his white-haired, feeble head at TULPE; pants from fatigue, coughs and tries to warm himself. Meanwhile, HANKE enters, lays his beggar's bag against the door and shivers with cold as he puts fuel into the stove.]

TULPE. Where er you been?

PLESCHKE. [*stuttering.*] Where—where have I been? Quite a way, quite a way. Up in the hills.

TULPE. Brought anythin' back?

PLESCHKE. Lots—lots of things. Th' priest giv' me this 'ere five-pfen-niger, and down at th' inn they give me—er—give me—er—a bowl er soup—

TULPE. Hand it over, and I'll warm it up.

[Takes a pot out of the bundle, sets it on the table and stirs the contents of the saucepan.]

PLESCHKE. I—I've got somethin' else in here—sausage. The butcher give it to me. Ay, the butcher.

TULPE. Where's the money?

PLESCHKE. Oh, the money's all right. Here's the money.

TULPE. Give it t' me. I'll take care of it for yer.

HETE. [*re-enters.*] Yer blamed old fool, why d' yer let her have it?

[She goes to the stove.]

TULPE. You mind yer own business.

HANKE. Don't worry. He's her sweetheart.

HETE. Saints alive!

HANKE. It's only right he should bring her home a trifle now and then, ain't it?

PLESCHKE. [*stammering.*] You—you ought—oughter know—better, you ought. Can't yer leave a poor old man alone an' not make game of him?

HETE. [*mimicking PLESCHKE.*] W—why—d—don't yer l—let the poor old man alone? Pleschke, yer gettin' shaky. You won't last much longer.

PLESCHKE. [*threatening her with a stick.*] Y—you'd best c—clear outer this!

HETE. I'd like to see you make me clear out.

PLESCHKE. Clear out! D' ye hear?

TULPE. Catch her one on the head. It'll do her good.

PLESCHKE. Clear out!

HANKE. O, drop it! Leave her alone.

[HETE, taking advantage of HANKE'S having turned his

back to defend her from PLESCHKE, makes a grab at his bag and tries to steal something from it. TULPE sees her and shakes with laughter.]

HANKE. I don't see much to laugh about.

TULPE. [*still laughing.*] He don't see nothin' to laugh at!

PLESCHKE. Oh, Lord, just look at her!

TULPE. Yer'd best look arter yer bag, or maybe you'll miss somethin'.

HANKE. [*turns and sees that he has been tricked.*] You would, would you, you devil! [*rushes after HETE.*] Just you let me get at you!

[Tramping of feet, as HANKE runs up the staircase after HETE. Smothered cries.]

PLESCHKE. Well, well, well! She's a smart 'un.

[He laughs. TULPE joins in his laughter, which is interrupted by the sound of the sudden opening and shutting of a door.]

W—what was that?

[Howling wind heard outside. Snow dashes against the window-panes. Then all is quiet for a moment. The schoolmaster, GOTTWALD, a man of two-and-thirty, with a dark beard, enters, carrying HANNELE MATTERN, a girl of about fourteen. The child whimpers. Her long red hair streams over the schoolmaster's shoulders, her face is pressed against his throat, her arms hang straight and limp. The rags in which she is clothed barely cover her. GOTTWALD takes no notice of PLESCHKE and TULPE, carries the child in tenderly, and lays her on the bed, which stands on the right near the wall. He is followed by SEIDEL, a wood-cutter, who carries a lantern in one hand. He also carries a saw, an axe, and a bundle of rags. On his grey

head he wears a shabby old hat.]

PLESCHKE. [*staring stupidly at the newcomers.*] Hulloa, hulloa, hulloa! W—What's the matter?

GOTTWALD. [*laying his overcoat and some blankets over HANNELE.*] Hot bricks, Seidel! Quick.

SEIDEL. [*to TULPE.*] Don't stand there doin' nothin'. Heat some bricks. Look sharp!

TULPE. What's the matter with the girl?

SEIDEL. I've no time for talkin'.

[*Exit with TULPE.*]

GOTTWALD. [*trying to soothe HANNELE.*] There, there, don't you fear. We'll soon put you right.

HANNELE. [*her teeth chattering.*] I'm afraid! I'm afraid!

GOTTWALD. Fear nothing. We won't let any harm come to you.

HANNELE. It's father! It's father!

GOTTWALD. Why, he's not here, my dear.

HANNELE. I'm afraid of father. Oh, if he should come!

GOTTWALD. Ssh! Ssh! He won't come.

[*Hurried steps are heard on the staircase. HETE bustles in, with an iron grater in her hand.*]

HETE. [*holding up the grater.*] Just look what Hanke's got!

[*HANKE rushes in after HETE and tries to take the grater from her. She flings it into the middle of the room.*]

HANNELE. [*screams with terror.*] He's coming! He's coming!

[*She half rises, leans forward, with anguish on her pale, sick, pinched little face, and stares at the place from which the noise comes. HETE dodges away from HANKE and runs into the back room. HANKE goes to pick up the grater.*]

HANKE. [*astonished.*] I'll give you a taste of it presently, you slut, you!

GOTTWALD. [*to HANNELE.*] It's all right, my child. [*to HANKE.*] What are you doing here?

HANKE. What am I doin' here?

HETE. [*putting her head in at the back door.*] 'Tain't his! He stole it!

HANKE. [*threatening.*] You wait a bit! I'll get even with you.

GOTTWALD. I beg you to be quiet. The child's ill.

HANKE. [*picks up the grater and draws back abashed.*] Why, what's the matter?

SEIDEL. [*enters with two bricks.*] These ought to do.

GOTTWALD. [*examining the bricks.*] Are they warm enough?

SEIDEL. Oh, they'll warm her.

[*He puts one of the bricks under HANNELE's feet.*]

GOTTWALD. Put the other one there.

[*Points to another place.*]

SEIDEL. She don't seem much warmer yet.

GOTTWALD. The child's shivering with cold.

[*TULPE has entered, following*

SEIDEL. Behind her enter HETE and PLESCHKE and several other paupers, who stand in the doorway whispering and fussing about inquisitively. TULPE moves to the bedside and stands there with her arms akimbo.]

TULPE. Brandy and hot water 'ud do her good.

SEIDEL. [*pulls out a flask; so do PLESCHKE and HANKE.*] There's just a drop left.

TULPE. [*at the stove.*] Bring it here.

SEIDEL. Is the water hot?

TULPE. Scaldin'!

GOTTWALD. You'd better put in a lump of sugar.

HETE. Where d'yer s'pose we'd get sugar from?

TULPE. Aw, shut up! Yer know yer've got some stowed away.

HETE. Yer lie. I ain't got no sugar.

[*Laughs nervously.*]

TULPE. It's you that's lyin'. I saw her bring it in.

SEIDEL. [*to HETE.*] Run and get it, can't you?

HANKE. [*to HETE.*] What are yer waitin' for?

HETE. [*doggedly.*] Fetch it yerself.

PLESCHKE. Get the sugar!

HETE. Yer can get all yer want at the grocer's. [*Exit.*]

SEIDEL. And if you don't get some at the grocer's, double quick time—Well, you'll see! That's all I've got to say. You won't want more nor I'll give you, my lass.

PLESCHKE. [*who has been out, returns.*] Ah, she's a bad lot, she is.

SEIDEL. I'd like to have the handlin' of her. I'd take her down a bit, I would, if I was the Burgomaster. She's got no business to be in an almshouse—a great, big, healthy slut like her. Why don't she work?

PLESCHKE. H—here's a—b—b—bit of sugar.

HANKE. [*sniffing the aroma of the grog.*] I'd like to be ill myself, I would!

[*SCHMIDT enters with a lantern. His manner is important and impressive.*]

SCHMIDT. Now then, make room there. The judge'll be here in a moment.

[*BERGER, the magistrate, enters. His manner stamps him as a retired officer. He wears a short beard. Although his hair is grizzled, he seems still youthful and good-looking. He wears a well-cut, long overcoat. His cocked hat is set jauntily on his head. One of his characteristics is a boyish swagger.*]

THE PAUPERS. Evenin', Judge. Evenin', Captain!

BERGER. Evenin'. [*takes his hat and cloak and puts them down with his stick. With a commanding gesture.*] Out with you, the whole lot of you.

[*SCHMIDT hustles THE PAUPERS into the back room.*]

BERGER. Evenin', Schoolmaster. [*holds out his hand.*] How are you getting on?

GOTTWALD. We've just pulled the child out of the water!

SEIDEL. [*stepping forward.*] Excuse me, Judge. [*makes a military salute.*] I was working later than usual down at

t' smithy. You see, I was puttin' a new clamp round my axe—and just as I was comin' out er—t' smithy—down yonder by the pond, Judge—you know the big pond—it's pretty nigh as big as a lake—[*BERGER makes an impatient gesture.*] Yes, Judge. Well, there's a corner in that pond as never freezes over—I can call to mind when I was a boy—

BERGER. Never mind that. Go on with your story.

SEIDEL. [*saluting again.*] Yes, Cap'n. Well—as I was sayin', I'd just come out o' t' smithy and was standin' in th' moonlight, when I heard some one cryin'. At first I thought it was only some one makin' believe, as you might say. But happenin' to look toward the pond, I saw somethin' in the water! Yes, Judge. Where it never freezes over. I called out to say I was a-comin', but she'd fainted! Well, I just ran back and fetched a plank from t' smithy and laid it over the hole—and in a moment I had brought her safe to land again.

BERGER. Bravo, Seidel. We don't hear that sort of tale every day. We hear more about quarrelling and fighting, and head-breaking, down in the village. . . . And then, I suppose, you brought her straight up here?

SEIDEL. Excuse me, Judge. It was the teacher—

GOTTWALD. I happened to be passing by on my way home from a lecture. So I took her to my house first and got my wife to find some warm clothes for her.

BERGER. What do you make of the affair?

SEIDEL. [*hesitating.*] Well, you see—h'm. She's Mattern's stepdaughter.

BERGER. [*seems shocked.*] That ragged little thing Mattern's stepdaughter?

SEIDEL. Ay. Her mother died six weeks ago. . . . There ain't much more to tell. She kicked and scratched because she thought I was her stepfather.

BERGER. [*thinking of MATTERN, mutters.*] The scoundrell!

SEIDEL. He's bin sittin' at the inn,

drinkin' hard, ever since yesterday. It takes a cask to fill *him* up, it does.

BERGER. He'll have a score to settle with me, for this job. [*bends over HANNELE.*] Now, my child. Listen. You needn't cry about it. What's the girl looking at me like that for? . . . I won't hurt you. What's your name? . . . A little louder, please. I can't hear you—[*he rises.*] The child seems very stubborn.

GOTTWALD. She's only frightened . . . Hannele!

HANNELE. [*gasping.*] Yes, sir!

GOTTWALD. Do as the Judge bids you, child.

HANNELE. [*shivering.*] Dear Lord, I'm freezing!

SEIDEL. [*bringing in the grog.*] There. Take a drop o' this, my lass.

HANNELE. [*as before.*] Dear Lord, I'm hungry!

GOTTWALD. [*to the Magistrate.*] It's no use. We can't make her drink.

HANNELE. It hurts!

GOTTWALD. Where does it hurt you, little one?

HANNELE. Oh, I'm afraid! I'm afraid!

BERGER. Who's frightening you, my dear? Come, come, now. Tell us all about it. Don't be afraid. What was that?—I can't understand a word you're saying. Try and remember how it happened. Did your stepfather ill-treat you?—Did he beat you or lock you up or—turn you out into the street?—It's hard to get anything out of her—

SEIDEL. Ay! She ain't fond er chat-terin'! Choppin' trees is easier nür making' *her* talk. She's as still as a mouse, *she* is.

BERGER. If we only had facts to go on—we might have the fellow locked up.

GOTTWALD. She's terribly afraid of him.

SEIDEL. 'Tain't the first time, neither, as he's been caught at this sort of game. Jest you ask the folks about him. They'll tell you what sort of man he is. It's a wonder she wasn't killed years ago.

BERGER. What has he done to her?

SEIDEL. Done?—Druv her out o' doors o' nights. That's what he's done to her. Sent her out a-beggin' in the snow. That's what he's done. And if she didn't bring him back enough to get him roarin' drunk, out she'd have to go agen. That's what he's done. Many's the night she's froze and cried her eyes out, she has.

GOTTWALD. It wasn't quite so bad while her mother lived.

BERGER. Well, anyhow, we'll have the man arrested. He's a notorious drunkard. Now, my little maid, just look me straight in the face.

HANNELE. [*imploringly.*] Oh, please, please, please!

SEIDEL. 'Tain't no use your askin' questions. You won't get nothin' out o' her.

GOTTWALD. [*gently.*] Hannele!

HANNELE. Yes, sir.

GOTTWALD. Do you know me?

HANNELE. Yes, sir.

GOTTWALD. Who am I?

HANNELE. Teacher, sir—Teacher Gottwald.

GOTTWALD. That's right. We're getting along famously. Now, my dear child, tell us all about it. Don't be afraid. How is it you did not stay at home instead of going down to the pond by the blacksmith's? Eh?

HANNELE. I'm afraid! I'm afraid!

BERGER. We'll go away, and you can say all you have to say to the school-master.

HANNELE. [*shyly and mysteriously.*] He called me!

GOTTWALD. Who called you, my dear?

HANNELE. The Lord Jesus.

GOTTWALD. Where did the Lord Jesus call you?

HANNELE. From the water.

GOTTWALD. Where?

HANNELE. Why, from the bottom of the water.

BERGER. [*changing his mind and putting on his overcoat.*] We'd better have the doctor fetched. I daresay he's not left the inn yet.

GOTTWALD. I have sent for one of

the Sisters. The child needs very careful nursing.

BERGER. I'll go for the doctor at once. [*to SCHMIDT.*] Bring the policeman to me at the inn, Schmidt. We'll have the fellow locked up. Good-night, Schoolmaster.

[*BERGER and SCHMIDT exeunt.*
HANNELE falls asleep.]

SEIDEL. [*after a pause.*] He won't lock him up. Not much.

GOTTWALD. Why not?
SEIDEL. He knows why, he does. *Who's the girl's father, eh?*

GOTTWALD. Stuff, Seidel. That's all gossip.

SEIDEL. All right. I knows what I knows.

GOTTWALD. You mustn't mind what people say. Half are lies.—I only wish the doctor would make haste.

SEIDEL. [*softly.*] She won't get over it. You'll see.

[*Enter DR. WACHLER, a grave-looking man of four-and-thirty.*]

DR. WACH. Good evening!

GOTTWALD. Good evening, Doctor.

SEIDEL. [*helping the DOCTOR to take off his fur overcoat.*] Good evening, Doctor.

DR. WACH. [*warming his hands at the stove.*] I should like another candle. [*the sound of a barrel-organ comes from the adjoining room.*] They must have lost their wits!

SEIDEL. [*at the half-closed door of the back room.*] Can't you keep quiet in there?

[*Noise ceases.* SEIDEL goes into the back room.]

DR. WACH. Mr. Gottwald, I believe?

GOTTWALD. That is my name.

DR. WACH. I hear she tried to drown herself?

GOTTWALD. She saw no other way out of her troubles, poor child.

[*Short pause.*]

DR. WACH. [*watching HANNELE beside her bed.*] Has she been talking in her sleep?

HANNELE. Millions and millions of stars! [*DR. WACHLER and GOTTWALD watch the child. Through the window*

the moonlight streams on the group.] Why are you pulling at my bones? Don't! Don't! It hurts, oh, it does hurt so!

DR. WACH. [*carefully loosening the collar of HANNELE'S chemise.*] Her body is a mass of bruises!

SEIDEL. Ah, and that's how her mother looked when she was put in her coffin!

DR. WACH. Shocking! Shocking!

HANNELE. [*in a changed, peevish voice.*] I won't go home. I won't! I want to go to Dame Holle.—Let me go to the pond.—Let me go!—Oh, that dreadful, dreadful smell!—Father, you've been drinking brandy again!—Hark! how the wind blows in the wood!—There was a storm in the hills this morning.—Oh, I do hope there won't be a fire.—Do you hear? Oh, what a storm!—It'll blow the tailor away, if he hasn't put his goose in his pocket!

[*Enter SISTER MARTHA.*]

GOTTWALD. Good evening, Sister.

[*SISTER MARTHA bends her head in response.* GOTTWALD joins her at the back of the stage, where she is getting everything ready for nursing.]

HANNELE. Where's mother? In Heaven? How far away it is! [*she opens her eyes, stares about her in a dazed way, rubs her eyes slowly and says in an almost inaudible voice.*] Where am I?

DR. WACH. [*bending over her.*] You're with friends, Hannele.

HANNELE. I'm thirsty.

DR. WACH. Water!

[*SEIDEL, who has brought in another candle, goes out to get some water.*]

DR. WACH. Does it pain you anywhere? [*HANNELE shakes her head.*] No. That's first-rate. We'll soon put you right.

HANNELE. Please, sir, are you the doctor?

DR. WACH. Yes, my dear.

HANNELE. Am I very, very ill?

DR. WACH. No, no! not very ill.

HANNELE. Are you going to make me well again?

DR. WACH. [*examining her quickly.*] Does that hurt? No! Does that? Ah, this is the place!—Don't be frightened! I won't hurt you. Is this where the pain is?

GOTTWALD. [*returning to the bedside.*] Answer the doctor, Hannele.

HANNELE. [*earnestly, imploringly, tearfully.*] Oh, dear Teacher Gottwald!

GOTTWALD. Come, come! Attend to what the doctor says and answer his questions. [*HANNELE shakes her head.*] No? Why not?

HANNELE. Oh, do, do let me go to mother!

GOTTWALD. [*deeply moved—strokes her hair gently.*] Don't, don't say that, my child.

[*Short pause. The DOCTOR lifts his head, draws a long breath and reflects for a moment. SISTER MARTHA has brought the lighted candle from the table and stands near by, holding it.*]

DR. WACH. [*beckons to SISTER MARTHA.*] One moment, Sister.

[*The DOCTOR and SISTER MARTHA retire to the table. The DOCTOR gives the SISTER some instructions in an undertone. GOTTWALD glances at HANNELE, the SISTER, and the DOCTOR alternately. He stands waiting, hat in hand.*]

DR. WACH. [*ends his quiet talk with SISTER MARTHA.*] I'll look in again later on. I'll have the medicine sent round. [*to GOTTWALD.*] It seems they have arrested the man at the inn.

SISTER M. Yes. So they say.

DR. WACH. [*putting on his overcoat, to SEIDEL.*] You'd better come to the apothecary's with me.

[*The DOCTOR, GOTTWALD and SEIDEL take leave of SISTER MARTHA quietly as they move toward the door.*]

GOTTWALD. [*in a casual way.*] What do you think of the case, Doctor?

[*DOCTOR, GOTTWALD, and SEIDEL*

exeunt. SISTER MARTHA, who is now alone with HANNELE, pours some milk into a bowl. Meanwhile, HANNELE opens her eyes and watches her.]

HANNELE. Have you come from Jesus?

SISTER M. What did you say, dear?

HANNELE. Have you come from the Lord Jesus?

SISTER M. Why, Hannele, have you forgotten me? I'm Sister Martha. Don't you remember coming to see us one day and praying and singing those beautiful hymns?

HANNELE. [*nodding joyfully.*] Oh, yes, yes. Such beautiful, beautiful hymns!

SISTER M. I've come to nurse you, in God's name, till you get well.

HANNELE. I don't want to get well.

SISTER M. [*bringing her the milk.*] The doctor says you must take a little of this milk, to make you strong again.

HANNELE. [*turns away.*] I don't want to get well.

SISTER M. Don't want to get well? That's not sensible, my dear. There, let me tie your hair up.

[*She ties her hair.*]
HANNELE. [*crying quietly.*] I don't want to get well.

SISTER M. Well, I declare! Why not?

HANNELE. Oh, how I long to go to Heaven, Sister.

SISTER M. We all long for that, darling. But we must be patient and wait until God calls us, and then, if we repent of our sins—

HANNELE. [*eagerly.*] I do repent, Sister! Indeed, indeed I do!

SISTER M. —and if we believe in the Lord Jesus—

HANNELE. I do believe in Him!

SISTER M. Then you may wait in peace, my child.—Let me smooth your pillow for you.—There. Now go to sleep.

HANNELE. I can't sleep.

SISTER M. Oh, yes, you can, if you try.

HANNELE. Sister Martha!

SISTER M. Well, dear?

HANNELE. Sister! Are there any—any unpardonable sins?

SISTER M. We won't talk about that now. You must not excite yourself.

HANNELE. Please, please, please! Won't you tell me?

SISTER M. Yes, yes. There *are* sins that God won't pardon—sins against the Holy Ghost!

HANNELE. Oh, do you think I've committed one?

SISTER M. Nonsense. Why, only very, *very* wicked people, like Judas, who betrayed our Lord, could commit those sins.

HANNELE. You don't know—you don't know.

SISTER M. Hush. You must go to sleep.

HANNELE. I'm so afraid.

SISTER M. You need not be.

HANNELE. But if I have committed one?

SISTER M. Oh, but you haven't.

HANNELE. [*clings to the SISTER and stares into the darkness.*] Sister! Sister!

SISTER M. Hush, dear, hush!

HANNELE. Sister!

SISTER M. What is it?

HANNELE. He's coming. Can't you hear him?

SISTER M. I hear nothing.

HANNELE. That's his voice—outside! Hark!

SISTER M. Whose voice?

HANNELE. Father's! Father's! There he is!

SISTER M. Where? I don't see him.

HANNELE. Look!

SISTER M. Where?

HANNELE. At the foot of the bed!

SISTER M. It's only this coat and hat, darling. We'll take the nasty things away and give them to Daddy Pleschke. And then I'll bring some water and we'll make a compress for you. You won't be afraid if I leave you alone for a few moments, will you? Lie quite still till I come back.

HANNELE. Was it really only the coat and hat, Sister? How silly of me!

SISTER M. Keep quite still. I'll be

back directly. [*she goes out, but returns, as the courtyard is pitch dark.*] I'll put the candle outside in the courtyard for a minute. [*shaking her finger tenderly at HANNELE.*] Now mind! Keep still! [*She goes out.*]

[*It is almost dark in the room. As soon as the SISTER has gone, the figure of MATERN, the mason, appears at the foot of the bed. He has a drunken and unkempt look, tangled red hair, and a shabby old soldier's cap. In his left hand he holds his tools. Round his right wrist is a cord. He stares threateningly at HANNELE as if about to strike. A pale light envelopes the apparition and streams on to the bed. HANNELE covers her face with her hands in terror. She writhes and moans piteously.*]

THE APPARITION. [*in a hoarse and exasperated voice.*]: Where are you? Loafin' agen, 'as usual, eh? 'Ill teach yer to skulk, you little devil, you. So you've been tellin' tales, have you? Tellin' the folks I ill-uses you, eh? I beats you, eh? Aren't you ashamed to tell such lies? You ain't no child of mine. Get up, you lazy baggage. I don't want to have nothin' more to do with you. I've half a mind to turn you out into the gutter. Get up and light the fire. D'yer hear? If I keeps you it's out o' charity. Now then, up with you? You won't, won't you? Well then, look out—

[HANNELE, with an effort, rises. Her eyes remain closed. She drags herself to the stove, opens the stove door, and falls senseless as SISTER MARTHA returns with a lighted candle and a jug of water. The apparition vanishes. SISTER MARTHA staggers, stares at HANNELE as she lies among the ashes, and exclaims.]

SISTER M. Saints alive! [*she puts down the candle and the jug, hastens to HANNELE, and lifts her from the floor; hearing her cry, the inmates of the*

almshouse rush in.] I just left her for a moment to fetch some water and she got out of bed. Here, Hedwig, give me a hand!

HANKE. You'd best be careful, or you'll hurt her.

PLESCHKE. It d—don't seem nat'ral to me, Sister. Someone must a bewitched the girl.

TULPE. That's what's wrong wi' her.

HANKE. [*loudly.*] She won't last long, she won't.

SISTER M. [*when with HEDWIG'S assistance she has put HANNELE to bed again.*] That may be all very true, my good man, but you really must not excite the child.

HANKE. You're makin' quite a fuss about her, ain't you?

PLESCHKE. [*to HANKE.*] You're a bad lot you are—a reg'lar out an' out bad lot. Ain't you got sense enough to know—as—as—sick folk mustn't be excited?

HETE. [*mimicking him.*] S—sick folk mustn't be excited—

SISTER M. I really must request you—

TULPE. Quite right, Sister.—You get out o' here!

HANKE. When we wants to go, we'll go, and not before.

HETE. The stable's good enough for the likes of us.

PLESCHKE. Don't make no fuss—you'll find a place to sleep in, you will.

[*The inmates of the almshouse go out.*]

HANNELE. [*opens her eyes; she seems terrified.*] Has he gone?

SISTER M. They've all gone, Hannele. Did they frighten you?

HANNELE. [*still terrified.*] Has father gone?

SISTER M. He hasn't been here.

HANNELE. Oh yes, he has, Sister!

SISTER M. You dreamed it, my dear.

HANNELE. [*sighing deeply.*] Oh, dear Lord Jesus! Dear, dear Lord Jesus! Won't you please, please, take me away from here!

[*Her tone changes.*]

"Oh, would He but come
And guide my way home!
I'm worn and I'm weary
No more can I roam!"

Yes, yes. I'm sure He will, Sister.

SISTER M. What, dear?

HANNELE. He's promised to take me to Him, Sister.

SISTER M. H'm. [*Coughs.*]

HANNELE. He's promised.

SISTER M. Who has promised?

HANNELE. [*whispering mysteriously into the SISTER'S ear.*] The dear Lord—Gottwald!

SISTER M. Get off to sleep again, Hannele, that's a good girl.

HANNELE. Isn't he handsome, Sister? Don't you think teacher's handsome? His name is Heinrich!—Did you know that? What a beautiful name! [*fervently.*] Dear, good, kind Heinrich! Sister, when I grow up, we're going to be married!

"And when the priest had made them one,

Away they went together.

They rested on a snow-white bed
Within a darkened chamber."

He has such a lovely beard. [*entranced.*] And, oh, his head's covered with such sweet white clover!—Hark! He's calling me! Don't you hear?

SISTER M. Do go to sleep, my pet. No one is calling.

HANNELE. It was the voice of—Jesus. Hark! He's calling me again. Oh, I hear Him quite plainly. "Hannele! Hannele!"—Let me go to Him!

SISTER M. When God calls He will find me ready!

HANNELE. [*her head is now bathed in moonlight; she makes a gesture as though she were inhaling some sweet perfume.*] Don't you smell them, Sister?

SISTER M. No, Hannele.

HANNELE. Lilacs! [*her ecstasy increases.*] Listen! Listen! [*a sweet voice is faintly heard in the far distance.*] Is that the angels singing? Don't you hear?

SISTER M. Yes, dear, I hear. But now you must turn round and have a good long sleep.

HANNELE. Can you sing that, too?

SISTER M. Sing what, my child?

HANNELE. "Sleep, darling, sleep!"

SISTER M. Would you like me to?

HANNELE. [*lies back and strokes the SISTER's hand.*] Mother, mother! Sing to me!

SISTER M. [*extinguishes the light, bends over the bed, and softly intones the following verses to the accompaniment of distant music.*]

"Sleep, darling sleep!

In the garden goes a sheep.

[*She sings the rest in darkness.*]

A little lamb with thee shall play,

From dawn to sunset, all the day.

Sleep, darling, sleep!"

[*Twilight fills the room. SISTER MARTHA has gone. The pale and ghostly form of a woman appears and seats itself on the side of the bed. She is slightly bent and seems to rest on her thin bare arms. Her feet are bare. Her long white locks stream over her shoulders and upon the bed. Her face seems worn and wasted. Her sunken eyes, though closed, seem fixed on HANNELE. Her voice sounds as the voice of one speaking in her sleep. Before she speaks, her lips are seen to move, as though it cost her a great effort to get the words out. She is prematurely aged. Her cheeks are hollow, and she is clad in miserable clothes.*]

FEMALE APPARITION. Hannele!

HANNELE. [*her eyes, also, are closed.*] Mother, dearest mother! Is it you?

FEMALE APPAR. It is I.—I have washed the feet of my Saviour with my tears, and I have dried them with my hair.

HANNELE. Do you bring me good tidings?

FEMALE APPAR. Yes!

HANNELE. Have you come far?

FEMALE APPAR. Hundreds of thousands of miles, through the night!

HANNELE. How strange you look, mother!

FEMALE APPAR. As the children of earth look, so I look!

HANNELE. There are buttercups and daisies on your lips. Your voice rings like music.

FEMALE APPAR. It is no true ring, my child.

HANNELE. Mother, dear mother, your beauty dazzles me!

FEMALE APPAR. The angels in Heaven are a thousandfold more radiant!

HANNELE. Why are you not like them?

FEMALE APPAR. I suffered for your sake.

HANNELE. Mother mine, won't you stay with me?

FEMALE APPAR. [*rising.*] I cannot stay!

HANNELE. Is it beautiful where you have come from?

FEMALE APPAR. There the wide meadows are sheltered from the wind and storm and hail. God shields them.

HANNELE. Can you rest there when you are tired?

FEMALE APPAR. Yes!

HANNELE. Can you get food to eat there, when you are hungry?

FEMALE APPAR. There is meat and fruit for all who hunger, and golden wine for those who thirst.

[*She shrinks away.*]

HANNELE. Are you going, mother?

FEMALE APPAR. God calls me!

HANNELE. Does He call loudly?

FEMALE APPAR. He calls me loudly!

HANNELE. My heart is parched within me, mother!

FEMALE APPAR. God will cool it with roses and with lilies.

HANNELE. Mother, will God redeem me?

FEMALE APPAR. Do you know this flower I hold here in my hand?

HANNELE. It's golden sesame! The key of Heaven!

FEMALE APPAR. [*puts it into HAN-*

NELE's hand.] Take it and keep it as God's pledge. Farewell!

HANNELE. Mother! Mother, don't leave me!

FEMALE APPAR. [*shrinks away.*] A little while and ye shall not see me, and again a little while and ye shall see me.

HANNELE. I'm afraid.

FEMALE APPAR. [*shrinking still farther away.*] Even as the snowdrifts on the hills are swept away by the winds, so shall thy troubles be lifted from thee.

HANNELE. Don't go!

FEMALE APPAR. The Children of Heaven are as lightnings in the Night. Sleep!

[*The room gradually grows dark. Pretty voices of young children are heard singing the second verse of "Sleep, darling, sleep."*]

"Sleep, darling, sleep!
Bright guests their vigils keep—

[*A gold-green light suddenly floods the room. Three radiant ANGELS, crowned with roses, and having the forms of beautiful winged youths, appear and take up the song. In their hands they hold music. The FEMALE APPARITION has vanished.*]

The guests who guard thee thro' the night

Are angels from the realms of Light.
Sleep, darling, sleep!"

HANNELE. [*opens her eyes and gazes rapturously at the ANGELS.*] Angels! [*her joy and her amazement grow, but she seems still in doubt.*] Angels!! [*triumphantly.*] Angels!!!

[*Short. pause. Then the ANGELS sing the following strophes from the music in their hands.*]

FIRST ANGEL

The sunlight that gleamed on the mountains

Gave nothing to thee of its gold.

The wavering green of the valleys
For thee ne'er its wealth would unfold.

SECOND ANGEL

The life-giving grain as it ripened
Thy craving for bread did not heed.
The kine as they grazed in the meadows
Denied thee their milk in thy need.

THIRD ANGEL

The buds and the blossoms around thee,
Whose sweetness delighted the day,
Their glory of azure and purple
Ne'er shed on the shards of thy way.
[*Brief pause.*]

FIRST ANGEL

A heavenly greeting we bring thee
From out of the darkness of space,
And the tips of our radiant pinions
Are touched with God's grace.

SECOND ANGEL

In the hem of our raiment we bear thee
The fragrance and joy of the Spring.
The rose of the morn, newly born,
On our lips we bring.

THIRD ANGEL

The mystic, green glow of our Homeland
Illumines our feet in the skies.
The spires of The City Eternal
Shine deep in our eyes.

ACT II

The scene is as it was before the appearance of the ANGELS.

[*THE DEACONESS (SISTER MARTHA) sits beside HANNELE's bed. She lights the candle again and HANNELE awakes. Her inward rapture is still shown in the expression of her face. As soon as she recognizes SISTER MARTHA she breaks into joyous talk.*]

HANNELE. Sister! Sister Martha! Do you know who has been here? Angels! Angels, Sister!

SISTER M. Aha! You're wide awake again.

HANNELE. Yes, yes. Only think of it. [*impulsively.*] Angels! Angels! Real angels, from heaven, Sister Martha, with great, big wings!

SISTER M. What sweet dreams you must have had, dear!

HANNELE. Why do you speak of dreams? Look, look! See what I have in my hand!

[*She holds out an imaginary flower to her.*]

SISTER M. What is it, dearest?

HANNELE. Can't you see?

SISTER M. H'm.

HANNELE. Look at it, Sister. Only look!

SISTER M. I see, dear.

HANNELE. Smell how sweet it is!

SISTER M. [*pretending to smell.*] Beautiful!

HANNELE. Take care, take care. You'll crush it.

SISTER M. Oh, no, I mustn't do that, my dear. What do you call this wonderful flower?

HANNELE. Why, golden sesame, of course!

SISTER M. Oh!

HANNELE. Of course it is. Can't you see? Bring the light here. Quick! Quick!

SISTER M. Ah! Now I see.

HANNELE. Isn't it beautiful?

SISTER M. Yes, yes. But you mustn't talk so much, my child. You must keep quite, quite still, or else the doctor will be angry. Now you must take the medicine he sent for you.

HANNELE. Oh, Sister, why will you worry so much about me? You don't know what has happened—do you, now? Who do you think it was gave me this lovely golden sesame? Guess, guess.—What's sesame for? Don't you know, Sister?

SISTER M. Ssh! You can tell me all about it in the morning, when you are strong, and bright, and well again.

HANNELE. I am well.

[*She tries to rise and puts her feet out of bed.*]

SISTER M. You mustn't do that, Hannele dear.

HANNELE. [*waving her away, gets out of bed and walks a few steps.*] Please—please do leave me alone. I must go away—away. [*she starts and stares fixedly at something.*] Oh, dear Lord Jesus!

[*The figure of an ANGEL, clad in black and with black wings, appears. The ANGEL is tall, majestic and beautiful. In his hands he holds a long, wavy sword, the hilt of which is wrapped in crape. The ANGEL is seated near the stove. He is silent and serious. He gazes steadily and calmly at HANNELE. A supernatural white light fills the room.*]

Who are you? [*Pause.*]

Are you an angel? [*no answer.*] Is it me you want? [*no answer.*] I am Hannele Mattern. Have you come for me? [*Again no answer.*]

[*During this incident, SISTER MARTHA has stood looking on, perplexed and thoughtful, with folded hands. She slowly passes out of the room.*]

Has God made you dumb? Are you an angel? [*no answer.*] Are you one of God's good angels? [*no answer.*] Will you be kind to me? [*no answer.*] Are you an enemy? [*no answer.*] Why have you hidden that sword in the folds of your dress? [*silence.*] I'm so cold, so cold. Your look chills me. You're icy cold. [*still silence.*] Who are you?

[*No answer. Terror suddenly overmasters her. She screams and turns as if appealing for help to someone behind her.*]

Mother! Mother!

[*A figure, dressed like the DEACONESS, but younger and more beautiful, and with great white wings, enters the room.*]

HANNELE *hurries toward the figure, and clutches at her hand.*]

Mother, mother! There's someone in the room!

DEACONESS. Where?

HANNELE. There—there!

DEACONESS. Why do you tremble so?

HANNELE. I'm afraid.

DEACONESS. Fear nothing. I am with you.

HANNELE. My teeth are chattering. I can't *help* it, mother! He terrifies me!

DEACONESS. Fear not, my child. He is your friend.

HANNELE. Who is it, mother?

DEACONESS. Do you not know him?

HANNELE. Who is he?

DEACONESS. He is Death!

HANNELE. Death! [*she stares fixedly and fearfully at the ANGEL for a moment.*] Must it—must it be?

DEACONESS. Death is the gate, Hannele!

HANNELE. Is there no other, mother dear?

DEACONESS. There is no other.

HANNELE. Will you be cruel to me, Death?—He won't answer! Why won't he answer any of my questions, mother?

DEACONESS. The voice of God has answered you already.

HANNELE. Oh, dear Lord God, I have so often longed for this. But now—now I am afraid!

DEACONESS. Get ready, Hannele.

HANNELE. For death, mother?

DEACONESS. For death.

HANNELE. [*timidly, after a pause.*] Shall I have to wear these ragged clothes when they put me into the coffin?

DEACONESS. God will clothe you.

one hand he has a pair of crystal slippers. He has a comical, see-saw gait, bows silently to the ANGEL and the DEACONESS, and lastly, and obsequiously, to HANNELE.]

THE VILLAGE TAILOR. [*bobbing and bowing.*] Johanna Katherina Mattern, your most obedient. [*clears his throat.*] Your father, his Excellency the Count, has done me the honour of ordering this bridal robe for you.

DEACONESS. [*takes the dress from the TAILOR, and attires HANNELE.*] I will help you to put it on, Hannele.

HANNELE. [*joyfully.*] Oh, how it rustles!

DEACONESS. It's white silk, Hannele.

HANNELE. Won't the people be astonished to see me so beautifully dressed in my coffin!

THE VILLAGE TAILOR. Johanna Katherina Mattern—[*he clears his throat.*] The village is full of it. [*he clears his throat.*] It's full of the good luck your death is bringing you. [*clears his throat.*] Your father, his Excellency the Count—[*coughs*] has just been talking to the Burgomaster about it.

DEACONESS. [*puts wreath on HANNELE's head.*] Lift up your head, you heavenly bride!

HANNELE. [*trembling with childish pleasure.*] Oh, Sister Martha, I'm so glad I am to die. [*breaking off suddenly and doubtfully.*] You are Sister Martha, are you not?

DEACONESS. Yes, my child.

HANNELE. No, no. You're not Sister Martha. You are my mother!

DEACONESS. Yes.

HANNELE. Are you both of them?

DEACONESS. The children of Heaven are all one in God.

THE VILLAGE TAILOR. If I may say so, Princess Hannele—[*he kneels to put on the slippers*] these slippers are the smallest in the land. Hedwig, and Agnes, and Liese, and Martha, and Minna, and Anna, and Kathe, and Gretchen, and the rest of them all have such very large feet. [*he puts on the*

[*She produces a small silver bell and rings it. In response there enters—silently, like all the following apparitions—a little humpbacked VILLAGE TAILOR, carrying on his arm a bridal dress, a veil and a wreath. In*

slippers.] But they fit you—they fit you! We've found the bride! Princess Hannele's feet are the smallest!—Is there anything else I can do for you? [*bows and scrapes.*] Your servant, Princess. Your servant. [*He goes.*]

HANNELE. Who would have dreamed it, mother?

DEACONESS. Now you need not take any more of that nasty physic.

HANNELE. No.

DEACONESS. Soon you will be as bright and blithe as a lark, now, darling.

HANNELE. Oh, yes!

DEACONESS. Come, dear, and lie down on your death-bed.

[*She takes HANNELE by the hand, leads her gently to the bed and waits while HANNELE lies down.*]

HANNELE. Now I'll soon know what death is, won't I?

DEACONESS. You will, Hannele.

HANNELE. [*lying on her back and playing with an imaginary flower.*] I have a pledge here!

DEACONESS. Press it closely to your breast.

HANNELE. [*growing frightened again and glancing at the ANGEL.*] Must it—must it be?

DEACONESS. It must.

[*Sounds of a funeral march heard in the remote distance.*]

HANNELE. [*listening.*] That's Master Seyfried and the musicians announcing the funeral. [*The ANGEL rises.*] Oh, he's getting up!

[*The storm outside gains strength. The ANGEL draws nearer to HANNELE.*]

Sister! Mother! He's coming to me! Where are you? I can't see you! [*appealing to the ANGEL.*] Make haste, thou dark and silent spirit! [*speaking as though a heavy weight oppressed her.*] He's pressing me down! [*the ANGEL solemnly lifts up his sword.*] He'll crush me to pieces! [*with anguish.*] Help, Sister, help!

[*The DEACONESS steps majestically between the ANGEL and HANNELE, and lays her*

hand protectingly on the child's heart. She speaks loftily, impressively, and with authority.]

DEACONESS. He dare not. I lay my consecrated hands upon thy heart.

[*The dark ANGEL vanishes. Silence.*]

[*The DEACONESS lapses into meditation and her lips move as if in prayer. The sound of the funeral march has continued through this scene. A noise as of many tramping feet is heard. The form of the schoolmaster, GOTTWALD, appears in the central doorway. The funeral march ceases. GOTTWALD is dressed in mourning and bears a bunch of lovely bluebells in his hand. He takes his hat off reverently, and on entering makes a gesture as though he would have silence. Behind him are ranged his pupils—boys and girls, in Sunday clothes. At the gesture of the SCHOOLMASTER, they stop chattering, and seem afraid to cross the threshold. GOTTWALD approaches the DEACONESS with a radiant look upon his face.*]

GOTTWALD. Good day, Sister Martha.

DEACONESS. Good day, Teacher Gottwald.

GOTTWALD. [*shakes his head sadly as he looks at HANNELE.*] Poor little maid!

DEACONESS. Why are you so sad, Teacher Gottwald?

GOTTWALD. Is she not dead?

DEACONESS. Is that a thing to grieve over? She has found peace at last. I envy her.

GOTTWALD. [*sighing.*] Ay, she is free from care and sorrow now. It is all for the best.

DEACONESS. [*looking steadfastly at HANNELE.*] How fair she seems!

GOTTWALD. Yes, very fair. Death seems to have clothed her with beauty.

DEACONESS. God has made her beautiful, because she loved Him.

GOTTWALD. Yes, she was always good and pious.

[Sighs heavily, opens his hymn book, and peers into it sadly.]

DEACONESS. *[peering into the hymn book.]* We should not repine. We must be patient.

GOTTWALD. And yet my heart is heavy.

DEACONESS. You do not mourn to know that she is saved?

GOTTWALD. I mourn to think that two fair flowers have withered.

DEACONESS. I do not understand you.

GOTTWALD. I have two faded violets in this book. How like they are to the dead eyes of my poor little Hannele!

DEACONESS. They will grow bright and blue again in Heaven.

GOTTWALD. Oh, Lord, how long must we still wander in this vale of tears! *[his voice changes abruptly; he becomes bustling and business-like; produces a hymn book.]* I thought it would be a good idea to sing the first hymn here—in the house—"Jesus, my Guide—"

DEACONESS. It is a beautiful hymn and Hannele Mattern was a pious child.

GOTTWALD. And then, you know, when we get to the churchyard, we can sing, "Now lettest Thou thy servant." *[he turns to the school children and addresses them.]* Hymn No. 62! *[intones hymn, slowly beating time.]* "Now lettest-Thou-thy-servant, De-par-ar-art-in-peace—" *[the children chime in.]* Children, have you all warm clothes on? It will be cold out yonder in the churchyard. Come in and take one last look at our poor Hannele.

[The children enter and range themselves about the bed.]

See how beautiful death has made the child. Once she was clad in rags. Now she wears silken raiment. She went barefooted once. Now she has crystal slippers on her feet. Ere very long she will be taken to a house all built of gold, where she will nevermore know thirst or hunger.

Do you remember how you used to mock at her and call her Princess Rag-Tag?—Now she is going away from us to be a real princess in Heaven. If any of you have offended her, now is the time to beg for her forgiveness. If you do not, she will tell her Heavenly Father how unkind you were to her, and it will go hard with you.

A CHILD. *[stepping forward.]* Dear Princess Hannele, please, please forgive me and don't tell God that I used to call you Princess Rag-Tag.

ALL THE CHILDREN. *[together.]* We are all very, very sorry.

GOTTWALD. That's right, children. Hannele will forgive you. Now, boys and girls, go inside and wait till I join you.

DEACONESS. Come into the back room with me and I will tell you what you must all do if you want to join the bright angels some day, like Hannele.

[She goes out. The children follow. The door closes.]

GOTTWALD. *[alone with HANNELE; he lays his flowers at her feet.]* My dear, dear Hannele, here are the violets I have brought you. *[kneels by the bedside; his voice trembles.]* Do not forget me in your new felicity. *[he sobs and lays his head against the folds of her dress.]* My heart is breaking at the thought of parting from you.

[Voices are heard without. GOTTWALD rises and lays a covering over HANNELE. Two aging women, dressed as if for a funeral, and with handkerchiefs and yellow-edged hymn books in their hands, push their way into the room.]

1ST WOMAN. *[glancing around.]* We're ahead of them all.

2ND WOMAN. No, we ain't. There's the Teacher. Good day, Teacher.

GOTTWALD. Good day.

1ST WOMAN. You're takin' it to heart, Teacher. Well, well, I allow she was a sweet child. My, what a busy little thing she was, to be sure!

2ND WOMAN. Say, Teacher, we've heard as how she killed herself. It ain't true, is it?

3RD WOMAN. [*appears.*] 'Tud be a mortal sin!

2ND WOMAN. Ay, that it would.

3RD WOMAN. The minister, he says, there ain't no pardon for it.

GOTTWALD. The Saviour said, "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not."

4TH WOMAN. [*enters.*] Dear, dear, what weather we're havin'! We'll all be froze, I guess, before we've done. I hope the parson won't keep us long in the churchyard. The snow's a foot deep in the churchyard.

5TH WOMAN. [*enters.*] Th' parson won't have no prayers read over her. He says as how consecrated ground ain't no place for the likes er her.

PLESCHKE. [*enters.*] Ha' yer heard the news? A grand stranger's bin to see the parson. He says that Mattern's Hannele's a saint.

HANKE. [*hurrying in.*] They're bringing her a crystal coffin.

SEVERAL VOICES. [*together.*] A crystal coffin!

HANKE. Reckon it'll cost a pretty sum.

SEVERAL VOICES. [*together.*] A crystal coffin!

SEIDEL. [*enters.*] There's strange goin's on down in the village. An angel's bin there—an angel as big's a poplar, they do say. An' there's more of 'em down at th' blacksmith's—little uns, they be, no bigger nor babies. [*looking at HANNELE.*] She don't look like a beggar, she don't.

SEVERAL VOICES. [*scattered.*] No, she don't look like a beggar—

A crystal coffin!—Did you ever hear the like!—And angels in the village!

[*Four youths clad in white enter, bearing a crystal coffin, which they put down close to HANNELE'S bed. They whisper to each other excitedly and curiously.*]

GOTTWALD. [*slightly raising the cloth.*] Would you like to have a look at the dead child?

1ST WOMAN. [*peeping at HANNELE.*]

Just look at her hair. Why, if it ain't shinin' just like gold!

GOTTWALD. [*drawing the cloth completely from the body which is flooded with a pale light.*] Have you seen her silk dress and crystal slippers?

[*All utter exclamations of surprise, and draw back.*]

SEVERAL VOICES. [*confusedly.*] Lord, how beautiful!—why, that ain't our Hannele!—That can't be Mattern's Hannele!—Well, if it ain't wonderfull!

PLESCHKE. She's a saint, sure enough.

[*The four youths lay HANNELE reverently in the crystal coffin.*]

HANKE. I told you there wouldn't be no buryin' for her.

1ST WOMAN. I reckon they'll put her into the church.

2ND WOMAN. I don't believe the girl's dead at all. She looks too lifelike for that.

PLESCHKE. G—gi' me—gi' me—a feather.—We'll soon see if she's dead.—Just gi' me a feather—[*they give him a feather; he holds it before her lips.*] It don't stir! The girl's dead, sure enough, she is. There ain't no life left in her.

3RD WOMAN. I'd kinder like to give her this bit o' rosemary.

[*She puts a sprig into the coffin.*]

4TH WOMAN. She can have my lavender, too.

5TH WOMAN. Why, where's Mattern?

1ST WOMAN. Ay, where's Mattern?

2ND WOMAN. Where he allus is, drinkin' down at th' inn.

1ST WOMAN. May be he don't know what's happened?

2ND WOMAN. He don't know nothin' when he's full o' drink.

PLESCHKE. Wot? Ain't no one told him there's a dead body in the house?

3RD WOMAN. He might er found that out for hisself.

4TH WOMAN. I'm not accusin' anyone, I ain't. But it do seem odd the man who killed the child, as you might say, shouldn't know nothin' about it.

SEIDEL. That's what I say, and every

one in th' village 'ud say the same. Why, she's got a bruise on her as big as my fist.

5TH WOMAN. He's the devil's own child, is Mattern.

SEIDEL. I saw that there bruise when I was helpin' to put her to bed. I tell yer, it was as big as my fist. That's what settled her business.

1ST WOMAN. He's the man as done it.

ALL. [*whispering angrily to one another.*] That's what he is.

2ND WOMAN. I call him a murderer.

ALL. He's a murderer, a murderer!

[*The drunken voice of MATTERN, the mason, is heard without.*]

MATTERN. [*without.*] Lemme in, d' ye hear? Lemme in! I ain't done no harm to nobody. [*he appears in the doorway and bawls.*] Where are you hidin', you good-for-nothin' hussy? [*he staggers.*] I'll give you till I count five. Then look out. Now then. One — two — three — and one makes — Come out, damn you, you hussy. What d' ye mean by makin' me lose my temper? Lemme get a sight of you, that's all, I say, and I'll break every bone in your body. [*he stumbles, recovers and stares stupidly at the silent by-standers.*] What are you starin' at me for? [*no answer.*] What d' ye want? Devil take you all. I ain't done nothin' to the girl. Come out, d' ye hear? And mighty quick about it, too. [*he chuckles to himself.*] I know what I'm about, if I have had a drop too much. What, you ain't gone yet—[*savagely.*] Don't stand there glarin' at me or I'll—

[*A man wearing a long, shabby, brown robe enters. He is about thirty years old. His hair is long and dark. His face is the face of the schoolmaster, GOTTWALD. In his left hand he holds a soft hat. He has sandals on his feet. He seems weary and travel-stained. He interrupts the mason by laying his hand gently on his arm.* MATTERN turns round roughly. The

STRANGER looks him steadily and calmly in the face.]

THE STRANGER. [*gently.*] Mattern, the mason, God's peace be with thee.

MATTERN. Where do you come from? What do you want?

THE STRANGER. [*appealing.*] My feet are weary and bloodstained. Give me water wherewith to wash them. The burning sun has parched my tongue. Give me wine, wherewith to cool it. No food has passed my lips since early morn. Give me bread, wherewith to still my hunger.

MATTERN. It's none of my business. If you'd been working, like an honest man, instead o' trampin' up and down the country roads, you'd be all right. I have to work for my livin'.

THE STRANGER. I am a workman.

MATTERN. You're a vagabond, you are. Honest workmen don't starve.

THE STRANGER. For my work no man pays me.

MATTERN. You're a vagabond.

THE STRANGER. [*faintly, submissively, but pressingly.*] I am a physician. Hast thou not need of me?

MATTERN. Not I. I'm not sick. No doctors for me.

THE STRANGER. [*his voice trembling with emotion.*] Mattern, the mason, bethink thee! Though thou hast denied me water, I will heal thee. Though thou hast refused me bread, yet I can make thee well. God is my witness.

MATTERN. Be off with you, d' ye hear? Be off. My bones are sound. I don't want nothin' to do with doctors. Will you clear out?

THE STRANGER. Mattern, the mason, bethink thee well. I will wash thy feet. I will give thee wine. Thou shalt have sweet, white bread to eat. Set thy foot upon my head, and I will still heal thee, as God liveth.

MATTERN. You won't go, won't you, eh? I'll have to throw you out?

THE STRANGER. [*impressively.*] Mattern, the mason, dost thou not know what lies within this house?

MATTERN. There ain't nothin' lyin'

here but what belongs to the place, 'ceptin' you. Off you go, damn you!

THE STRANGER. [*simply.*] Thy daughter lies here, sick.

MATTERN. She don't want no doctors to cure her complaint. She's lazy. That's wot's the matter with her. I'll cure her, and mighty quick, too, if she don't stop skulkin'.

THE STRANGER. [*loftily.*] Mattern, the mason, I come to thee as a messenger.

MATTERN. A messenger? Who sent you, eh?

THE STRANGER. I come from the Father, and I go unto the Father. What hast thou done with His child?

MATTERN. P'raps you know where she's hidin' herself better than I do. What are His children to me? He don't seem to trouble Himself much about them.

THE STRANGER. [*directly.*] There is one dead within these walls.

MATTERN. [*sees HANNELE, approaches the coffin silently, and looks in, muttering.*] Where the devil did she get all them fine clothes and that 'ere crystal coffin? [*the coffin-bearers whisper together angrily, "Murderer!" "Murderer!"*] MATTERN, *softly and stammering:*] I—n—never did ye n—no harm. I was kind to you, I was. I didn't deny you nothin'—[*brutally, to the STRANGER.*] Wot d' yer want? Come, speak out and ha' done with it? 'Tain't no business of mine.

THE STRANGER. Mattern, the mason, hast thou nothing to say to me? [*the coffin-bearers grow more and more excited, and frequent exclamations of "Murderer!" "Murderer!" are heard.*] Hast thou not sinned? Hast thou never dragged her from her sleep at night and beaten her till she grew faint with pain and anguish?

MATTERN. [*frenzied with excitement.*] May Heaven strike me dead if I have!

[*Faint blue lightning and distant thunder.*]

ALL. [*scattered voices.*] It's thundering!—Thundering in mid-winter!—

He's perjured himself!—The murderer's perjured himself!

THE STRANGER. [*gently and persuasively.*] Hast thou still nothing to confess, Mattern?

MATTERN. [*panic-struck.*] Those whom the Lord loveth, He chasteneth. That's what I did to the girl. I treated her as though she was my own child, I did.

THE WOMEN. [*rushing at him.*] Murderer! Murderer!

MATTERN. She lied to me and cheated me.

THE STRANGER. Is this the truth?

MATTERN. So help me God!

[*The golden sesame appears in HANNELE's clasped hands. A mystic greenish-yellow light streams from it. The sight dismay MATTERN, who recoils in terror.*]

THE STRANGER. Mattern, the mason, thou hast lied to me.

ALL. [*scattered voices.*] A miracle! A miracle!

PLESCHKE. The girl's a saint, sure. He's perjured hisself, he has.

MATTERN. [*shouting.*] I'll go hang myself!

[*He presses his hands to his temples and goes.*]

THE STRANGER. [*advances to the coffin and turns to the bystanders, who draw back in awe of his now noble and imposing form.*] Be not afraid! [*he stops and presses HANNELE's hand; then in a gentle tone.*] The maiden is not dead. She sleepeth. [*earnestly.*] Johanna Mattern!

[*A golden-green light steals into the room. HANNELE opens her eyes and, with the help of the STRANGER's hand, rises, not yet daring to fix her eyes on him. She leaves the coffin and sinks upon her knees before the STRANGER. The bystanders flee in consternation. The STRANGER and HANNELE remain alone. The STRANGER's shabby gown falls from his shoulders. Beneath it is a robe of white and gold.*]

THE STRANGER. [*tenderly.*] Hannele!

HANNELE. [*with rapture, bending her head low.*] 'Tis He!

THE STRANGER. Dost thou know me?

HANNELE. I have waited for Thee.

THE STRANGER. Canst thou name my name?

HANNELE. [*trembling with awe.*] Holy! Holy! Holy!

THE STRANGER. I know thy sorrow and thy pain.

HANNELE. I have longed for Thy coming.

THE STRANGER. Arise!

HANNELE. Thy dress is spotless. I am ashamed.

THE STRANGER. [*laying his right hand on HANNELE'S head.*] Thy shame I take from thee. [*he lifts her face gently and touches her eyelids.*] I fill thine eyes with everlasting light. Thy soul shall be all sunshine. Eternal brightness shall be thine, from dawn till eve and then till dawn again. Receive all radiant things, and feast thine eyes on all the glories of the deep blue sea and azure sky and fair green trees, forever and forever. [*he touches her ears.*] Let thine ears be opened to the music of the millions upon millions of God's angels. [*he touches her lips.*] Thus do I loose thy stammering tongue and quicken it with the life of thine own soul and my soul, and the soul of God Almighty.

[HANNELE, *trembling convulsively with rapture, tries to rise, but cannot. She sobs and buries her head in the STRANGER'S robe.*]

With these thy tears I cleanse thee from the dust and stain of earth. I will raise thee high above the stars of God.

[*The STRANGER lays his hand on the child's head and speaks the lines following to the accompanying strains of soft music. As he speaks, the forms of many angels appear, crowding through the doorway. Some are tall, some short. Some are*

radiant-winged boys and girls. They swing incense-censers and strew flowers, and spread rich stuffs on the floor.]

THE STRANGER

The Realm of Righteousness is filled with light and joy.

God's everlasting peace reigns there without alloy.

[*Harps are heard, at first played softly, then gradually swelling louder and louder.*]

Its mansions are marble, its roofs are of gold,

Through its rivulets ripple wines ruddy and old.

In its silver-white streets blow the lily and rose,

In its steeples the chiming of joy-bells grows.

The beautiful butterflies frolic and play

On its ramparts, rich-robed in the mosses of May.

Swans, twelve, soft as snow, ring them round in the sky,

And their wings thrill the air with sweet sounds as they fly.

And louder and louder the symphonies swell

Till their resonance reaches from Heav'n to Hell.

Forever and ever, through æons unending,

With music majestic their progress attending,

They soar above Zion and meadow and sea,

And their path is made lambent with mystery.

The blessed below, in the regions of Light,

Wander on, hand in hand, and rejoice in their flight.

In the depths of the radiant, the ruby-red waves,

Swan dives down after swan, as its plumage it laves.

So they wash themselves clean in the clear, deep red

Of the blood that the Lord, their dear Saviour, had shed,

And they pass from the glory of flood
and of foam,
To the rest and the bliss of their
heavenly home.

[*The STRANGER turns to the ANGELS, who have ended their work. With a timid joy they draw near and form a semi-circle round HANNELE and the STRANGER.*]

Bring hither finest linen, children
mine—

My fair, my pretty turtle-doves, come
hither.

Surround her weak and wasted little
frame

With comfort and with warmth, to keep
her free

From frost and fever, pain and weary
woe.

Be tender with her. Shield her from
rude touch,

And bear her swiftly up, on pinions
light.

Above the waving grasses of the lea,
Beyond the shimmering wastes of
moonlit space

Beyond the meads and groves of Para-
dise,

Into the cool and shade of boundless
peace.

Then, while she rests upon her silken
bed,

Prepare for her, in alabaster bath,
Water from mountain brook, and

purple wine, and milk of antelope,
We wash away the stain of earthly
ill!

From off the bushes break the budding
sprays,

Lilac and jessamine, with dew bent
low,

And let their moisture from the petals
flow

Softly upon her, as the showers in May.

Take linen rare and fine, to dry her
limbs

With loving hands, as ye would lily-
leaves.

From jewell'd chalices pour the reviv-
ing wine,

Pressed from the patient heart of fra-
grant fruit.

Delight her lips with sweets, her heart
delight

With all the dazzling splendours of the
morn.

Enchant her eyes with stately palaces.

Let humming-birds, in iris hues ar-
rayed,

From walls of malachite flash gold and
green.

Beneath her feet spread velvets, richly
wrought,

And strew her path with daffodils and
tulips.

To fan her cheek let palms in cadence
sway

And make her life unceasing holiday.

Where the red poppies rear their beau-
teous heads

And happy children dance to meet the
day,

Bid her repose, free now from tear and
sigh,

And witch her soul with gentle har-
mony.

THE ANGELS

[*Sing in chorus.*]

We bear thee away to the Heavenly
Rest,

Lullaby, into the Land of the Blest,
Lullaby, into the Land of the Blest!

[*The stage grows gradually dark, as the ANGELS sing. Out of the darkness the sound of their song is heard more and more faintly. Then the stage grows light. The interior of the almshouse is seen, exactly as before the first apparition. HANNELE—a poor, sick child, once more lies on the bed. DOCTOR WACHLER bends over her, with a stethoscope. THE DEACONESS (SISTER MARTHA) stands by, watching anxiously, and holding a candle in her hand. The ANGELS' song ceases.*]

THE EMPEROR JONES *

EUGENE GLADSTONE O'NEILL

CHARACTERS

BRUTUS JONES, *Emperor.*
HENRY SMITHERS, *A Cockney Trader.*
AN OLD NATIVE WOMAN.
LEM, *A Native Chief.*
SOLDIERS, *Adherents of LEM.*
*The Little Formless Fears; The Negro Convicts; The Prison Guard; The Plan-
ters; The Auctioneer; The Slaves; The
Congo Witch-Doctor; The Crocodile
God.*

The action of the play takes place on an island in the West Indies as yet not self-determined by White Marines. The form of native government is, for the time being, an Empire.

SCENE I.

The audience chamber in the palace of the Emperor—a spacious, high-ceilinged room with bare, whitewashed walls. The floor is of white tiles. In the rear, to the left of center, a wide archway giving out on a portico with white pillars. The palace is evidently situated on high ground, for beyond the portico nothing can be seen but a vista of hills, their summits crowned with thick groves of palm trees. In the right wall, center, a smaller arched doorway leading to the living quarters of the palace. The room is bare of furniture with the exception of one huge chair made of uncut wood which stands at center, its back to rear. This is very apparently the Emperor's throne. It is painted a dazzling, eye-smiting scar-

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let. There is a brilliant orange cushion on the seat and another smaller one is placed on the floor to serve as a footstool. Strips of matting, dyed scarlet, lead from the foot of the throne to the two entrances.

It is late afternoon but the sunlight still blazes yellowly beyond the portico and there is an oppressive burden of exhausting heat in the air.

As the curtain rises, a native negro woman sneaks in cautiously from the entrance on the right. She is very old, dressed in cheap calico, bare-footed, a red bandana handkerchief covering all but a few stray wisps of white hair. A bundle bound in colored cloth is carried over her shoulder on the end of a stick. She hesitates beside the doorway, peering back as if in extreme dread of being discovered. Then she begins to glide noiselessly, a step at a time, toward the doorway in the rear. At this moment, SMITHERS appears beneath the portico.

SMITHERS is a tall, stoop-shouldered man about forty. His bald head, perched on a long neck with an enormous Adam's apple, looks like an egg. The tropics have tanned his naturally pasty face with its small, sharp features to a sickly yellow, and native rum has painted his pointed nose to a startling red. His little, washy-blue eyes are red-rimmed and dart about him like a ferret's. His expression is one of unscrupulous meanness, cowardly and dangerous. He is dressed in a worn riding suit of dirty white drill, puttees, spurs, and wears a white cork helmet. A cartridge belt with an automatic revolver is around his waist. He carries a riding whip in his hand. He sees the woman and stops to watch her sus-

iciously. Then, making up his mind, he steps quickly on tiptoe into the room. The woman, looking back over her shoulders continually, does not see him until it is too late. When she does, SMITHERS springs forward and grabs her firmly by the shoulder. She struggles to get away, fiercely but silently.

SMITHERS. [tightening his grasp; roughly.] Easy! None o' that, me birdie. You can't wriggle out now. I got me 'ooks on yer.

WOMAN. [seeing the uselessness of struggling, gives way to frantic terror, and sinks to the ground, embracing his knees supplicatingly.] No tell him! No tell him, Mister!

SMITHERS. [with great curiosity.] Tell 'im? [then scornfully.] Oh, you mean 'is bloomin' Majesty. What's the gaime, any 'ow? What are you sneakin' away for? Been stealin' a bit, I s'pose.

[He taps her bundle with his riding whip significantly.]

WOMAN. [shaking her head vehemently.] No, me no steal.

SMITHERS. Bloody liar! But tell me what's up. There's somethin' funny goin' on. I smelled it in the air first thing I got up this mornin'. You blacks are up to some devilment. This palace of 'is is like a bleedin' tomb. Where's all the 'ands? [the WOMAN keeps sullenly silent; SMITHERS raises his whip threateningly.] Ow, yer won't, won't yer? I'll show yer what's what.

WOMAN. [coveringly.] I tell, Mister. You no hit. They go—all go.

[She makes a sweeping gesture toward the hills in the distance.]

SMITHERS. Run away—to the 'ills?

WOMAN. Yes, Mister. Him Emperor—Great Father. [she touches her forehead to the floor with a quick mechanical jerk.] Him sleep after eat. Then they go—all go. Me old woman. Me left only. Now me go too.

SMITHERS. [his astonishment giving way to an immense, mean satisfaction.] Ow! So that's the ticket! Well, I

know bloody well wot's in the air—when they runs off to the 'ills. The tom-tom 'll be thumping out there bloomin' soon. [with extreme vindictiveness.] And I'm bloody glad of it, for one! Serve 'im right! Puttin' on airs, the stinkin' nigger! 'Is Majesty! Gawd blimey! I only 'opes I'm there when they takes 'im out to shoot 'im. [suddenly.] 'E's still 'ere all right, ain't 'e?

WOMAN. Yes. Him sleep.

SMITHER. 'E's bound to find out soon as 'e wakes up. 'E's cunnin' enough to know when 'is time's come. [he goes to the doorway on right and whistles shrilly with his fingers in his mouth; the old WOMAN springs to her feet and runs out of the doorway, rear; SMITHERS goes after her, reaching for his revolver.] Stop or I'll shoot! [then stopping, indifferently.] Pop orf then, if yer like, yer black cow.

[He stands in the doorway, looking after her.]

[JONES enters from the right. He is a tall, powerfully-built, full-blooded negro of middle age. His features are typically negroid, yet there is something decidedly distinctive about his face—an underlying strength of will, a hardy, self-reliant confidence in himself that inspires respect. His eyes are alive with a keen, cunning intelligence. In manner he is shrewd, suspicious, evasive. He wears a light blue uniform coat, sprayed with brass buttons, heavy gold chevrons on his shoulders, gold braid on the collar, cuffs, etc. His pants are bright red with a light blue stripe down the side. Patent leather laced boots with brass spurs, and a belt with a long-barreled, pearl-handled revolver in a holster complete his make-up. Yet there is something not altogether ridiculous about his grandeur. He has a way of carrying it off.]

JONES. [not seeing anyone, greatly irritated and blinking sleepily, shouts,]

Who dare whistle dat way in my palace? Who dare wake up de Emperor? I'll git de hide frayed off some o' you niggers sho'!

SMITHERS. [*showing himself; in a manner half-afraid and half-defiant.*] It was me whistled to yer. [*as JONES frowns angrily.*] I got news fer yer.

JONES. [*putting on his suavest manner, which fails to cover up his contempt for the white man.*] Oh, it's you, Mister Smithers. [*he sits down on his throne with easy dignity.*] What news you got to tell me?

SMITHERS. [*coming close to enjoy his discomfiture.*] Don't yer notice nothin' funny today?

JONES. [*coldly.*] Funny? No. I ain't perceived nothin' of de kind!

SMITHERS. Then yer ain't so foxy as I thought yer was. Where's all your court? [*sarcastically.*] The Generals and the Cabinet Ministers and all?

JONES. [*imperturbably.*] Where dey mostly runs to minute I closes my eyes—drinkin' rum and talkin' big down in de town. [*sarcastically.*] How come you don't know dat? Ain't you sousin' with 'em most every day?

SMITHERS. [*stung but pretending indifference; with a wink.*] That's part of the day's work. I got ter—ain't I—in my business?

JONES. [*contemptuously.*] Yo' business!

SMITHERS. [*imprudently enraged.*] Gawd blimey, you was glad enough for me to take yer in on it when you landed here first. You didn' 'ave no 'igh and mighty airs in them days!

JONES. [*his hand going to his revolver like a flash; menacingly.*] Talk polite, white man! Talk polite, you heah me! I'm boss heah now, is you forgettin'?

[*The Cockney seems about to challenge this last statement with the facts but something in the other's eyes holds and cows him.*]

SMITHERS. [*in a cowardly whine.*] No 'arm meant, old top.

JONES. [*condescendingly.*] I accepts yo' apology. [*lets his hand fall from his revolver.*] No use'n you rakin' up

ole times. What I was den is one thing. What I is now's another. You didn't let me in on yo' crooked work out o' no kind feelin's dat time. I done de dirty work fo' you—and most o' de brain work, too, fo' dat matter—and I was wu'th money to you, dat's de reason.

SMITHERS. Well, blimey, I give yer a start, didn't I—when no one else would. I wasn't afraid to 'ire yer like the rest was—'count of the story about your breakin' jail back in the States.

JONES. No, you didn't have no s'cuse to look down on me fo' dat. You been in jail you'self more'n once.

SMITHERS. [*furiously.*] It's a lie! [*then trying to pass it off by an attempt at scorn.*] Garn! Who told yer that fairy tale?

JONES. Dey's some tings I ain't got to be tole. I kin see 'em in folk's eyes. [*then after a pause; meditatively.*] Yes, you sho' give me a start. And it didn't take long from dat time to git dese fool, woods' niggers right where I wanted dem. [*with pride.*] From stowaway to Emperor in two years! Dat's goin' some!

SMITHERS. [*with curiosity.*] And I bet you got yer pile o' money 'id safe some place.

JONES. [*with satisfaction.*] I sho' has! And it's in a foreign bank where no pusson don't ever git it out but me no matter what come. You didn't s'pose I was holdin' down dis Emperor job for de glory in it, did you? Sho'! De fuss and glory part of it, dat's only to turn de heads o' de low-flung, bush niggers dat's here. Dey wants de big circus show for deir money. I gives it to 'em an' I gits de money. [*with a grin.*] De long green, dat's me every time! [*then rebukingly.*] But you ain't got no kick agin me, Smithers. I'se paid you back all you done for me many times. Ain't I pertected you and winked at all de crooked tradin' you been doin' right out in de broad day? Sho' I has—and me makin' laws to stop it at de same time! [*He chuckles.*]

SMITHERS. [*grinning.*] But, meanin' no 'arm, you been grabbin' right and left yourself, ain't yer? Look at the

taxes you've put on 'em! Blimey! You've squeezed 'em dry!

JONES. [*chuckling.*] No, dey ain't all dry yet. I'se still heah, ain't I?

SMITHERS. [*smiling at his secret thought.*] They're dry right now, you'll find out. [*changing the subject abruptly.*] And as for me breakin' laws, you've broke 'em all yerself just as fast as yer made 'em.

JONES. Ain't I de Emperor? De laws don't go for him. [*judicially.*] You heah what I tells you, Smithers. Dere's little stealin' like you does, and dere's big stealin' like I does. For de little stealin' dey gits you in jail soon or late. For de big stealin' dey makes you Emperor and puts you in de Hall o' Fame when you croaks. [*reminiscently.*] If dey's one thing I learns in ten years on de Pullman ca's listenin' to de white quality talk, it's dat same fact. And when I gits a chance to use it I winds up Emperor in two years.

SMITHERS. [*unable to repress the genuine admiration of the small fry for the large.*] Yes, yer turned de bleedin' trick, all right. Blimey, I never seen a bloke 'as 'ad de bloomin' luck you 'as.

JONES. [*severely.*] Luck? What you mean—luck?

SMITHERS. I suppose you'll say as that swank about de silver bullet ain't luck—and dat was what first got de fool blacks on yer side de time of de revolution, wasn't it?

JONES. [*with a laugh.*] Oh, dat silver bullet! Sho' was luck! But I makes dat luck, you heah? I loads de dice! Yessuh! When dat murderin' nigger ole Lem hired to kill me takes aim ten feet away and his gun misses fire and I shoots him dead, what you heah me say?

SMITHERS. You said yer'd got a charm so's no lead bullet'd kill yer. You was so strong only a silver bullet could kill yer, you told 'em. Blimey, wasn't that swank for yer—and plain, fat-headed luck?

JONES. [*proudly.*] I got brains and I uses 'em quick. Dat ain't luck.

SMITHERS. Yer know they wasn't 'ardly liable to get no silver bullets.

And it was luck 'e didn't 'it you dat time.

JONES. [*laughing.*] And dere all dem fool, bush niggers was kneelin' down and bumpin' deir heads on de ground like I was a miracle out o' de Bible. Oh Lawd, from dat time on I has dem all eatin' out of my hand. I cracks de whip and dey jumps through.

SMITHERS. [*with a sniff.*] Yankee bluff done it.

JONES. Ain't a man's talking big what makes him big—long as he makes folks believe it? Sho', I talks large when I ain't got nothin' to back it up, but I ain't talkin' wild just de same. I knows I kin fool 'em—I knows it—and dat's backin' enough fo' my game. And ain't I got to learn deir lingo and teach some of dem English befo' I kin talk to 'em? Ain't dat wuk? You ain't never learned ary word er it, Smithers, in de ten years you been heah, dough you knows it's money in yo' pocket tradin' wid 'em if you does. But you'se too shiftless to take de trouble.

SMITHERS. [*flushing.*] Never mind about me. What's this I've heard about yer really 'avin' a silver bullet moulded for yourself?

JONES. It's playin' out my bluff. I has de silver bullet moulded and I tells 'em when de time comes I kills myself wid it. I tells 'em dat's 'cause I'm de on'y man in de world big enuff to git me. No use'n deir tryin'. And dey falls down and bumps deir heads. [*he laughs.*] I does dat so's I kin take a walk in peace widout no jealous nigger gunnin' at me from behind de trees.

SMITHERS. [*astonished.*] Then you 'ad it made—'onest?

JONES. Sho' did. Heah she be. [*he takes out his revolver, breaks it, and takes the silver bullet out of one chamber.*] Five lead an' dis silver baby at de last. Don't she shine pretty?

[*He holds it in his hand, looking at it admiringly, as if strangely fascinated.*]

SMITHERS. Let me see.

[*Reaches out his hand for it.*]

JONES. [*harshly.*] Keep yo' hands whar dey b'long, white man.

[*He replaces it in the chamber and puts the revolver back on his hip.*]

SMITHERS. [*snarling.*] Gawd blimey! Think I'm a bleedin' thief, you would.

JONES. No, 'tain't dat. I knows you're scared to steal from me. On'y I ain't 'lowin' nary body to touch dis baby. She's my rabbit's foot.

SMITHERS. [*sneering.*] A bloomin' charm, wot? [*venomously.*] Well, you'll need all de bloody charms you 'as before long, s' 'elp me!

JONES. [*judicially.*] Oh, I'se good for six months yit 'fore dey gits sick o' my game. Den, when I sees trouble comin', I makes my getaway.

SMITHERS. Ho! You got it all planned, ain't yer?

JONES. I ain't no fool. I knows dis Emperor's time is sho't. Dat why I make hay when de sun shine. Was you thinkin' I'se aimin' to hold down dis job for life? No, suh! What good is gittin' money if you stays back in dis raggedy country? I wants action when I spends. And when I sees dese niggers gittin' up deir nerve to tu'n me out, and I'se got all de money in sight, I resigns on de spot and beats it quick.

SMITHERS. Where to?

JONES. None o' yo' business.

SMITHERS. Not back to de bloody States, I'll lay my oath.

JONES. [*suspiciously.*] Why don't I? [*then with an easy laugh.*] You mean 'count of dat story 'bout me breakin' from jail back dere? Dat's all talk.

SMITHERS. [*skeptically.*] Ho, yes!

JONES. [*sharply.*] You ain't 'sinuatin' I'se a liar, is you?

SMITHERS. [*hastily.*] No, Gawd strike me! I was only thinkin' o' de bloody lies you told de blacks 'ere about killin' white men in de States.

JONES. [*angered.*] How come dey're lies?

SMITHERS. You'd 'ave been in jail if you 'ad, wouldn't yer then? [*with venom.*] And from what I've 'eard, it ain't 'ealthy for a black to kill a white

man in de States. They burns 'em in oil, don't they?

JONES. [*with cool deadliness.*] You mean lynchin' 'd scare me? Well, I tells you, Smithers, maybe I does kill one white man back there. Maybe I does. And maybe I kills another right heah 'fore long if he don't look out.

SMITHERS. [*trying to force a laugh.*] I was on'y spoofin' yer. Can't yer take a joke? And you was just sayin' you'd never been in jail.

JONES. [*in the same tone—slightly boastful.*] Maybe I goes to jail for gettin' in an argument wid razors ovah a crap game. Maybe I gits twenty years when dat colored man die. Maybe I gits in 'nother argument wid de prison guard was overseer ovah us when we're wukin' de roads. Maybe he hits me wid a whip and I splits his head wid a shovel and runs away and files de chain off my leg and gits away safe. Maybe I does all dat an' maybe I don't. It's a story I tells you so's you knows I'se de kind of man dat if you evah repeats one word of it, I ends yo' stealin' on dis yearth mighty damn quick!

SMITHERS. [*terrified.*] Think I'd peach on yer? Not me! Ain't I always been yer friend?

JONES. [*suddenly relaxing.*] Sho' you has—and you better be.

SMITHERS. [*recovering his composure and with it his malice.*] And just to show yer I'm yer friend, I'll tell yer dat bit o' news I was goin' to.

JONES. Go ahead! Shoot de piece. Must be bad news from de happy way you look.

SMITHERS. [*warningly.*] Maybe it's gettin' time for you to resign—with dat bloomin' silver bullet, wot?

[*He finishes with a mocking grin.*]

JONES. [*puzzled.*] What's dat you say? Talk plain.

SMITHERS. Ain't noticed any of de guards or servants about de place today, I 'aven't.

JONES. [*carelessly.*] Dey're all out in de garden sleepin' under de trees. When I sleeps, dey sneaks a sleep, too; and I pretends I never suspicions it.

All I got to do is to ring de bell and dey come flyin', makin' a bluff dey was wukin' all de time.

SMITHERS. [*in the same mocking tone.*] Ring the bell now an' you'll bloody well see what I mean.

JONES. [*startled to alertness, but preserving the same careless tone.*] Sho' I rings.

[*He reaches below the throne and pulls out a big, common dinner bell which is painted the same vivid scarlet as the throne. He rings this vigorously—then stops to listen. Then he goes to both doors, rings again, and looks out.*]

SMITHERS. [*watching him with malicious satisfaction; after a pause, mockingly.*] The bloody ship is sinkin' an' the bleedin' rats 'as slung their 'ooks.

JONES. [*in a sudden fit of anger flings the bell clattering into the corner.*] Low-flung, woods' niggers! [*then catching SMITHERS' eye on him, he controls himself and suddenly bursts into a low chuckling laugh.*] Reckon I overplays my hand dis once! A man can't take de pot on a bob-tailed flush all de time. Was I sayin' I'd sit in six months mo'? Well, I'se changed my mind den. I cashes in and resigns de job of Emperor right dis minute.

SMITHERS. [*with real admiration.*] Blimey, but you're a cool bird, and no mistake.

JONES. No use'n fussin'. When I knows de game's up, I kisses it good-bye widout no long waits. Dey've all run off to de hills, ain't dey?

SMITHERS. Yes—every bleedin' man jack of 'em.

JONES. Den de revolution is at de post. And de Emperor better git his feet smokin' up de trail.

[*He starts for the door in rear.*]

SMITHERS. Goin' to look for your 'orse? Yer won't find any. They steals the 'orses first thing. Mine was gone when I went for 'im this mornin'. That's wot first give me a suspicion of wot was up.

JONES. [*alarmed for a second,*

scratches his head, then philosophically.] Well, den I hoofs it. Feet, do yo' duty! [*he pulls out a gold watch and looks at it.*] Three-thuty. Sun-down's at six-thuty or dereabouts. [*puts his watch back; with cool confidence.*] I got plenty o' time to make it easy.

SMITHERS. Don't be so bloomin' sure of it. They'll be after you 'ot and 'eavy. Ole Lem is at the bottom o' this business an' 'e 'ates you like 'ell. 'E'd rather do for you than eat 'is dinner, 'e would!

JONES. [*scornfully.*] Dat fool no-count nigger! Does you think I'se scared o' him? I stands him on his thick head more'n once befo' dis, and I does it again if he come my way—[*fiercely.*] And dis time I leave him a dead nigger fo' sho'!

SMITHERS. You'll 'ave to cut through the big forest—an' these blacks 'ere can sniff and follow a trail in the dark like 'ounds. You'd 'ave to 'ustle to get through that forest in twelve hours even if you knew all the bloomin' trails like a native.

JONES. [*with indignant scorn.*] Look-a-heah, white man! Does you think I'se a natural bo'n fool? Give me credit fo' havin' some sense, fo' Lawd's sake! Don't you s'pose I'se looked ahead and made sho' of all de chances? I'se gone out in dat big forest, pretendin' to hunt, so many times dat I knows it high an' low like a book. I could go through on dem trails wid my eyes shut. [*with great contempt.*] Think dese ignerent bush niggers dat ain't got brains enuff to know deir own names even can catch Brutus Jones? Huh, I s'pects not! Not on yo' life! Why, man, de white men went after me wid bloodhounds where I come from an' I jes' laughs at 'em. It's a shame to fool dese black trash around heah, dey're so easy. You watch me, man. I'll make dem look sick, I will. I'll be 'cross de plain to de edge of de forest by time dark comes. Once in de woods in de night, dey got a swell chance o' findin' dis baby! Dawn tomorrow I'll be out at de oder side and

on de coast whar dat French gunboat is stayin'. She picks me up, takes me to the Martinique when she go dar, and dere I is safe wid a mighty big bankroll in my jeans. It's easy as rollin' off a log.

SMITHERS. [*maliciously.*] But s'posin' somethin' 'appens wrong an' they do nab yer?

JONES. [*decisively.*] Dey don't—dat's de answer.

SMITHERS. But, just for argyment's sake—what'd you do?

JONES. [*frowning.*] I'se got five lead bullets in dis gun good enuff fo' common bush niggers—and after dat I got de silver bullet left to cheat 'em out o' gittin' me.

SMITHERS. [*jeeringly.*] Ho, I was forgettin' that silver bullet. You'll bump yourself orf in style, won't yer? Blimey?

JONES. [*gloomily.*] You kin bet yo' whole roll on one thing, white man. Dis baby plays out his string to de end and when he quits, he quits wid a bang de way he ought. Silver bullet ain't none too good for him when he go, dat's a fac'! [*then shaking off his nervousness—with a confident laugh.*] Sho'! What is I talkin' about? Ain't come to dat yit and I never will—not wid trash niggers like dese yere. [*boastfully.*] Silver bullet bring me luck anyway. I kin outguess, outrun, outfight, an' outplay de whole lot o' dem all ovah de board any time o' day er night! You watch me!

[*From the distant hills comes the faint, steady thump of a tom-tom, low and vibrating. It starts at a rate exactly corresponding to normal pulse beat—72 to the minute—and continues at a gradually accelerating rate from this point uninterruptedly to the very end of the play.*] JONES starts at the sound. A strange look of apprehension creeps into his face for a moment as he listens. Then he asks, with an attempt to regain his most casual manner.]

What's dat drum beatin' fo'?

SMITHERS. [*with a mean grin.*] For you. That means the bleedin' ceremony 'as started. I've 'eard it before and I knows.

JONES. Cer'mony? What cer'mony?

SMITHERS. The blacks is 'oldin' a bloody meetin', 'avin' a war dance, gettin' their courage worked up b'fore they starts after you.

JONES. Let dem! Dey'll sho' need it!

SMITHERS. And they're 'oldin' their 'eathen religious service—makin' no end of devil spells and charms to 'elp 'em against your silver bullet. [*he guffaws loudly.*] Blimey, but they're balmy as 'ell!

JONES. [*a tiny bit awed and shaken in spite of himself.*] Huh! Takes more'n dat to scare dis chicken!

SMITHERS. [*scenting the other's feelings; maliciously.*] Ternight when it's pitch black in the forest, they'll 'ave their pet devils and ghosts 'oundin' after you. You'll find yer bloody 'air 'ill be standin' on end before termorrow mornin'. [*seriously.*] It's a bleedin' queer place, that stinkin' forest, even in daylight. Yer don't know what might 'appen in there, it's that rotten still. Always sends the cold shivers down my back the minute I gets in it.

JONES. [*with a contemptuous sniff.*] I ain't no chicken-liver like you. Trees an' me, we'se friends, and dar's a full moon comin' to bring me light. And let dem po' niggers make all de fool spells dey'se a min' to. Does yo' s'pect I'se silly enuff to b'lieve in ghosts and ha'nts an' all dat ole woman's talk? G'long, white man! You ain't talkin' to me. [*with a chuckle.*] Doesn't you know dey's got to do wid a man was member in good standin' o' de Baptist Church? Sho' I was dat when I was porter on de Pullmans, befo' I gits into my little trouble. Let dem try deir heathen tricks. De Baptist Church done pertect me and land dem all in hell. [*then with more confident satisfaction.*] And I'se got little silver bullet o' my own, don't forgit!

SMITHERS. Ho! You 'aven't give

much 'eed to your Baptist Church since you been down 'ere. I've 'eard myself you 'ad turned yer coat an' was takin' up with their blarsted witch-doctors, or whatever the 'ell yer calls the swine.

JONES. [*vehemently.*] I pretends to! Sho' I pretends! Dat's part o' my game from de fust. If I finds dem niggers believes dat black is white, den I yells it out louder'n deir loudest. It don't git me nothin' to do missionary work for de Baptist Church. I'se after de coin, an' I lays my Jesus on de shelf for de time bein'. [*stops abruptly to look at his watch; alertly.*] But I ain't got de time to waste no more fool talk wid you. I'se gwine away from heah dis secon'. [*he reaches in under the throne and pulls out an expensive Panama hat with a bright multi-colored band and sets it jauntily on his head.*] So long, white man! [*with a grin.*] See you in jail sometime, maybe!

SMITHERS. Not me, you won't. Well, I wouldn't be in yer bloody boots for no bloomin' money, but 'ere's wishin' yer luck just the same.

JONES. [*contemptuously.*] You're de frightenedest man evah I see! I tells you I'se safe's 'f I was in New York City. It takes dem niggers from now to dark to git up de nerve to start somethin'. By dat time, I'se got a head start dey never kotch up wid.

SMITHERS. [*maliciously.*] Give my regards to any ghosts yer meets up with.

JONES. [*grinning.*] If dat ghost got money, I'll tell him never ha'nt you less'n he wants to lose it.

SMITHERS. [*flattered.*] Garn! [*then curiously.*] Ain't yer takin' no luggage with yer?

JONES. I travels light when I wants to move fast. And I got tinned grub buried on de edge o' de forest. [*boastfully.*] Now say dat I don't look ahead an' use my brains! [*with a wide, liberal gesture.*] I will all dat's left in de palace to you—and you better grab all you kin sneak away wid befo' dey gits here.

SMITHERS. [*gratefully.*] Righto—

thanks ter yer. [*as JONES walks toward the door in rear; cautiously.*] Say! Look 'ere, you ain't goin' out that way, are yer?

JONES. Does you think I'd slink out de back door like a common nigger? I'se Emperor yit, ain't I? And de Emperor Jones leaves de way he comes, and dat black trash don't dare stop him—not yit, leastways. [*he stops for a moment in the doorway, listening to the far-off but insistent beat of the tom-tom.*] Listen to dat roll-call, will you? Must be mighty big drum carry dat far. [*then with a laugh.*] Well, if dey ain't no whole brass band to see me off, I sho' got de drum part of it. So long, white man.

[*He puts his hands in his pockets and with studied carelessness, whistling a tune, he saunters out of the doorway and off to the left.*]

SMITHERS. [*looks after him with a puzzled admiration.*] 'E's got his bloomin' nerve with 'im, s'elp mel [*then angrily.*] Ho—the bleedin' nigger—puttin' on his bloody airs! I 'opes they nabs 'im an' gives 'im what's what! [*then putting business before the pleasure of this thought, looking around him with cupidity.*] A bloke ought to find a 'ole lot in this palace that'd go for a bit of cash. Let's take a look, 'Arry, me lad.

[*He starts for the doorway on right as the curtain falls.*]

SCENE II.

Nightfall.

The end of the plain where the Great Forest begins. The foreground is sandy, level ground dotted by a few stones and clumps of stunted bushes covering close against the earth to escape the buffeting of the trade wind. In the rear the forest is a wall of darkness dividing the world. Only when the eye becomes accustomed to the gloom can the outlines of separate trunks of the nearest trees be made out,

enormous pillars of blackness. A somber monotone of wind lost in the leaves moans in the air. Yet this sound serves but to intensify the impression of the forest's relentless immobility, to form a background throwing into relief its brooding, implacable silence.

[JONES enters from the left, walking rapidly. He stops as he nears the edge of the forest, looks around him quickly, peering into the dark as if searching for some familiar landmark. Then, apparently satisfied that he is where he ought to be, he throws himself on the ground, dog-tired.]

Well, heah I is. In de nick o' time, too! Little mo' an' it'd be blacker'n de ace of spades heahabouts. [he pulls a bandana handkerchief from his hip pocket and mops off his perspiring face.] Sho'! Gimme air! I'se tuckered out sho' nuff. Dat soft Emperor job ain't no trainin' for a long hike ovah dat plain in de brilin' sun. [then with a chuckle.] Cheah up, nigger, de worst is yet to come. [he lifts his head and stares at the forest; his chuckle peters out abruptly; in a tone of awe.] My goodness, look at dem woods, will you? Dat no-count Smithers said dey'd be black an' he sho' called de turn. [turning away from them quickly and looking down at his feet, he snatches at a chance to change the subject; solicitously.] Feet, you is holdin' up yo' end fine an' I sutinly hopes you ain't blisterin' none. It's time you git a rest. [he takes off his shoes, his eyes studiously avoiding the forest; he feels of the soles of his feet gingerly.] You is still in de pink—only a mite feverish. Cool yo'selfs. Remember you done got a long journey yit befo' you. [he sits in a weary attitude, listening to the rhythmic beating of the tom-tom; he grumbles in a loud tone to cover up a growing uneasiness.] Bush niggers! Wonder dey wouldn't git sick o' beatin' dat drum. Sound louder, seem like. I wonder if dey's startin' after me? [he scrambles to his feet,

looking back across the plain.] Couldn't see dem now, nohow, if dey was hundred feet away. [then shaking himself like a wet dog to get rid of these depressing thoughts.] Sho', dey's miles an' miles behind. What you git-tin' fidgetty about? [but he sits down and begins to lace up his shoes in great haste, all the time muttering reassuringly.] You know what? Yo' belly is empty, dat's what's de matter wid you. Come time to eat! Wid nothin' but wind on yo' stumach, o' course you feels jiggedy. Well, we eats right heah an' now soon's I gits dese pesky shoes laced up. [he finishes lacing up his shoes.] Dere! Now le's see! [gets on his hands and knees and searches the ground around him with his eyes.] White stone, white stone, where is you? [he sees the first white stone and crawls to it; with satisfaction.] Heah you is! I knowed dis was de right place. Box of grub, come to me. [he turns over the stone and feels under it; in a tone of dismay.] Ain't heah! Gorry, is I in de right place or isn't I? Dere's 'nother stone. Guess dat's it. [he scrambles to the next stone and turns it over.] Ain't heah, neither! Grub, whar is you? Ain't heah. Gorry, has I got to go hungry into dem woods—all de night? [while he is talking he scrambles from one stone to another, turning them over in frantic haste, finally, he jumps to his feet excitedly.] Is I lost de place? Must have! But how dat happen when I was followin' de trail across de plain in broad daylight? [almost plaintively.] I'se hungry, I is! I gotta git my feed. Whar's my strength gonna come from if I doesn't? Gorry, I gotta find dat grub high an' low somehow! Why it come dark so quick like dat? Can't see nothin'. [he scratches a match on his trousers and peers about him; the rate of the beat of the far-off tom-tom increases perceptibly as he does so; he mutters in a bewildered voice.] How come all dese white stones come heah when I only remembers one? [suddenly, with a frightened gasp, he flings the match on the ground and stamps on it.]

Nigger, is you gone crazy mad? Is you lightin' matches to show dem whar you is? Fo' Lawd's sake, use yo' haid. Gorrry, I'se got to be careful! [*he stares at the plain behind him apprehensively, his hand on his revolver.*] But how come all dese white stones? And whar's dat tin box o' grub I hid all wrapped up in oil cloth?

[*While his back is turned, the LITTLE FORMLESS FEARS creep out from the deeper blackness of the forest. They are black, shapeless; only their glittering little eyes can be seen. If they have any describable form at all, it is that of a grubworm about the size of a creeping child. They move noiselessly, but with deliberate, painful effort, striving to raise themselves on end, failing and sinking prone again. JONES turns about to face the forest. He stares up at the tops of the trees, seeking vainly to discover his whereabouts by their conformation.*]

Can't tell nothin' from dem trees! Gorrry, nothin' 'round heah look like I evah seed it befo'. I'se done lost de place sho' 'nuff! [*with mournful foreboding.*] It's mighty queer! It's mighty queer! [*with sudden forced defiance; in an angry tone.*] Woods, is you tryin' to put somethin' ovah on me?

[*From the formless creatures on the ground in front of him comes a tiny gale of low mocking laughter like a rustling of leaves. They squirm upward toward him in twisted attitudes. JONES looks down, leaps backward with a yell of terror, yanking out his revolver as he does so, in a quavering voice.*]

What's dat? Who's dar? What is you? Git away from me befo' I shoots you up! You don't?—

[*He fires. There is a flash, a loud report, then silence*

broken only by the far-off, quickened throb of the tom-tom. The formless creatures have scurried back into the forest. JONES remains fixed in his position, listening intently. The sound of the shot, the reassuring feel of the revolver in his hand, have somewhat restored his shaken nerve. He addresses himself with renewed confidence.]

Dey're gone. Dat shot fix 'em. Dey was only little animals—little wild pigs, I reckon. Dey've maybe rooted out yo' grub an' eat it. Sho', you fool nigger, what you think dey is—ha'nts? [*excitedly.*] Gorrry, you give de game away when you fire dat shot. Dem niggers heah dat fo' su'tin! Time you beat it in de woods without no long waits. [*he starts for the forest, hesitates before the plunge, then urging himself in with manful resolution.*] Git in, nigger! What you skeered at? Ain't nothin' dere but de trees! Git in! [*He plunges boldly into the forest.*]

SCENE III.

Nine o'clock. In the forest. The moon has just risen. Its beams, drifting through the canopy of leaves, make a barely perceptible, suffused, eerie glow. A dense low wall of underbrush and creepers is in the nearer foreground, fencing in a small triangular clearing. Beyond this is the massed blackness of the forest like an encompassing barrier. A path is dimly discerned leading down to the clearing from left, rear, and winding away from it again toward the right. As the scene opens, nothing can be distinctly made out. Except for the beating of the tom-tom, which is a trifle louder and quicker than in the previous scene, there is silence, broken every few seconds by a queer, clicking sound. Then gradually the figure of the negro, JEFF, can be discerned crouching on his haunches at the rear

of the triangle. He is middle-aged, thin, brown in color, is dressed in a Pullman porter's uniform, cap, etc. He is throwing a pair of dice on the ground before him, picking them up, shaking them, casting them out with the regular, rigid, mechanical movements of an automaton. The heavy, plodding footsteps of some one approaching along the trail from the left are heard and JONES' voice, pitched in a slightly higher key and strained in a cheering effort to overcome its own terrors.

De moon's rizen. Does you heah dat, nigger? You gits more light from dis out. No mo' buttin' yo' fool head agin' de trunks an' scratchin' de hide off yo' legs in de bushes. Now you sees whar yo'se gwine. So cheer up! From now on you has a snap. [he steps just to the rear of the triangular clearing and mops off his face on his sleeves; he has lost his Panama hat; his face is scratched, his brilliant uniform shows several large rents.] What time's it gittin' to be, I wonder? I dassent light no match to find out. Phoo'. It's wa'm an' dat's a fac'! [wearily.] How long I been makin' tracks in dese woods? Must be hours an' hours. Seems like fo'evah! Yit can't be, when de moon's jes' riz. Dis am a long night fo' yo', yo' Majesty! [with a mournful chuckle.] Majesty! Der ain't much majesty 'bout dis baby now. [with attempted cheerfulness.] Never min'. It's all part o' de game. Dis night come to an end like everything else. And when you gits dar safe and has dat bankroll in yo' hands you laughs at all dis. [he starts to whistle but checks himself abruptly.] What yo' whistlin' for, you po' dope! Want all de worl' to heah you? [he stops talking to listen.] Heah dat ole drum! Sho' gits nearer from de sound. Dey're packin' it along wid 'em. Time fo' me to move. [he takes a step forward, then stops; worriedly.] What's dat odder queer clicketty sound I heah? Dere it is! Sound close! Sound like—sound like—Fo' God sake, sound like

some nigger was shootin' crap! [frightenedly.] I better beat it quick when I gits dem notions. [he walks quickly into the clear space, then stands transfixed as he sees JEFF; in a terrified gasp.] Who dar? Who dat? Is dat you, Jeff? [starting toward the other, forgetful for a moment of his surroundings and really believing it is a living man that he sees; in a tone of happy relief.] Jeff! I'se sho' mighty glad to see you! Dey tol' me you done died from dat razor cut I gives you. [stopping suddenly, bewilderedly.] But how you come to be heah, nigger? [he stares fascinatedly at the other who continues his mechanical play with the dice; JONES' eyes begin to roll wildly; he stutters.] 'Ain't you gwine—look up—can't you speak to me? Is you—is you—a ha'nt? [he jerks out his revolver in a frenzy of terrified rage.] Nigger, I kills you dead once. Has I got to kill you agin? You take it den. [he fires; when the smoke clears away JEFF has disappeared; JONES stands trembling, then with a certain reassurance.] He's gone, anyway. Ha'nt or no ha'nt, dat shot fix him. [the beat of the tom-tom is perceptibly louder and more rapid; JONES becomes conscious of it; with a start, looking back over his shoulder.] Dey's gitting near! Dey'se comin' fast! And heah I is shootin' shots to let 'em know jes' whar I is. Oh, Gorrry, I'se got to run.

[Forgetting the path, he plunges wildly into the underbrush in the rear and disappears in the shadow.]

SCENE IV.

Eleven o'clock. In the forest. A wide dirt road runs diagonally from right, front, to left, rear. Rising sheer on both sides the forest walls it in. The moon is now up. Under its light the road glimmers ghastly and unreal. It is as if the forest had stood aside momentarily to let the road pass

through and accomplish its veiled purpose. This done, the forest will fold in upon itself again and the road will be no more. JONES stumbles in from the forest on the right. His uniform is ragged and torn. He looks about him with numbed surprise when he sees the road, his eyes blinking in the bright moonlight. He flops down exhaustedly and pants heavily for a while. Then with sudden anger.

I'm meltin' wid heat! Runnin' an' runnin' an' runnin'! Damn dis heah coat! Like a strait jacket! [he tears off his coat and flings it away from him, revealing himself stripped to the waist.] Dere! Dat's better! Now I kin breathe! [looking down at his feet, the spurs catch his eye.] And to hell wid dese high-fangled spurs. Dey're what's been a'trippin' me up an' breakin' my neck. [he unstraps them and flings them away disgustedly.] Dere! I gits rid o' dem frippety Emperor trappin's an' I travels lighter. Lawd! I'se tired! [after a pause, listening to the insistent beat of the tom-tom in the distance.] I must 'a' put some distance between myself an' dem—runnin' like dat—and yit—dat damn drum sound jes' de same—nearer, even. Well, I guess I a'most holds my lead anyhow. Dey won't never catch up. [with a sigh.] If on'y my fool legs stands up. Oh, I'se sorry I evah went in for dis. Dat Emperor job is sho' hard to shake. [he looks around him suspiciously.] How'd dis road evah git heah? Good level road, too. I never remembers seein' it befo'. [shaking his head apprehensively.] Dese woods is sho' full o' de queerest things at night. [with a sudden terror.] Lawd God, don't let me see no more o' dem ha'nts! Dey gits my goat! [then trying to talk himself into confidence.] Ha'nts! You fool nigger, dey ain't no such things! Don't de Baptist parson tell you dat many time? Is you civilized, or is you like dese ign'rent black niggers heah? Sho'! Dat was all in yo' own head. Wasn't nothin' dere. Know what? You jus' get seein' dem things 'cause yo' belly's empty and

you's sick wid hunger inside. Hunger 'fects yo' head and yo' eyes. Any fool know dat. [then pleading fervently.] But bless God, I don't come across no more o' dem, whatever dey is! [then cautiously.] Rest! Don't talk! Rest! You needs it. Den you gits on yo' way again. You hits de coast in de mawn'ing! Den you'se all safe.

[From the right forward a small gang of negroes enter. They are dressed in striped convict suits, their heads are shaven, one leg drags limpingly, shackled to a heavy ball and chain. Some carry picks, the others shovels. They are followed by a white man dressed in the uniform of a prison guard. A Winchester rifle is slung across his shoulders and he carries a heavy whip. At a signal from the GUARD they stop on the road opposite where JONES is sitting. JONES, who has been staring up at the sky, unmindful of their noiseless approach, suddenly looks down and sees them. His eyes pop out, he tries to get to his feet and fly, but sinks back, too numbed by fright to move. His voice catches in a choking prayer.]

Lawd Jesus!

[The PRISON GUARD cracks his whip noiselessly, and at that signal all the convicts start to work on the road. They swing their picks, they shovel, but not a sound comes from their labor. Their movements, like those of JEFF in the preceding scene, are those of automata; rigid, slow, and mechanical. The PRISON GUARD points sternly at JONES with his whip, motions him to take his place among the other shovellers. JONES gets to his feet in a hypnotized stupor. He mumbles subserviently:]

Yes, suh! Yes, suh! I'se comin'.

[As he shuffles, dragging one foot, over to his place, he

curses under his breath with rage and hatred.]

God damn yo' soul, I gits even wid you yit, sometime.

[As if there were a shovel in his hands, he goes through weary, mechanical gestures of digging up dirt, and throwing it to the roadside. Suddenly the GUARD approaches him angrily, threateningly. He raises his whip and lashes JONES viciously across the shoulders with it. JONES winces with pain and cowers abjectly. The GUARD turns his back on him and walks away contemptuously. Instantly JONES straightens up. With arms upraised as if his shovel were a club in his hands, he springs murderously at the unsuspecting GUARD. In the act of crashing down his shovel on the white man's skull, JONES suddenly becomes aware that his hands are empty. He cries despairingly.]

Whar's my shovel? Gimme my shovel till I splits his damn head! [appealing to his fellow convicts.] Gimme a shovel, one o' you, fo' God's sake!

[They stand fixed in motionless attitudes, their eyes on the ground. The GUARD seems to wait expectantly, his back turned to the attacker. JONES bellows with baffled, terrified rage, tugging frantically at his revolver.]

I kills you, you white debil, if it's de last thing I evah does! Ghost or debil, I kill you agin!

[He frees the revolver and fires pointblank at the GUARD's back. Instantly the walls of the forest close in from both sides, the road and the figures of the convict gang are blotted out in an enshrouding darkness. The only sounds are a crashing in the underbrush as JONES leaps away in mad flight and the

throbbing of the tom-tom, still far distant, but increased in volume of sound and rapidity of beat.]

SCENE V.

One o'clock. A large circular clearing, enclosed by the serried ranks of gigantic trunks of tall trees whose tops are lost to view. In the center is a big dead stump worn by time into a curious resemblance to an auction block. The moon floods the clearing with a clear light. JONES forces his way in through the forest on the left. He looks wildly about the clearing with hunted, fearful glances. His pants are in tatters, his shoes cut and misshapen, flapping about his feet. He slinks cautiously to the stump in the center and sits down in a tense position, ready for instant flight. Then he holds his head in his hands and rocks back and forth, moaning to himself miserably.

Oh Lawd, Lawd! Oh Lawd, Lawd! [suddenly he throws himself on his knees and raises his clasped hands to the sky; in a voice of agonized pleading.] Lawd Jesus, heah my prayer! I'se a po' sinner! I knows I done wrong, I knows it! When I catches Jeff cheatin' wid loaded dice, my anger overcomes me and I kills him dead! Lawd, I done wrong! When dat guard hits me wid de whip, my anger overcomes me, and I kills him dead. Lawd, I done wrong! And down heah whar dese fool bush niggers raises me up to the seat o' de mighty, I steals all I could grab. Lawd, I done wrong! I knows it! I'se sorry! Forgive me, Lawd! Forgive dis po' sinner! [then beseeching terrifiedly.] And keep dem away, Lawd! Keep dem away from me! And stop dat drum soundin' in my ears! Dat begin to sound ha'nted, too. [he gets to his feet, evidently slightly reassured by his prayer, with attempted confidence.] De Lawd'll preserve me from dem ha'nts after dis. [sits down on the stump again.] I ain't

skeered o' real men. Let dem come. But dem odders—[*he shudders, then looks down at his feet, working his toes inside the shoes; with a groan.*] Oh, my po' feet! Dem shoes ain't no use no more 'ceptin' to hurt. I'se better off widout dem. [*he unlaces them and pulls them off; holds the wrecks of the shoes in his hands and regards them mournfully.*] You was real, A-one patin' leather, too. Look at you now, Emperor, you'se gittin' mighty low!

[*He sighs dejectedly and remains with bowed shoulders, staring down at the shoes in his hands as if reluctant to throw them away. While his attention is thus occupied, a crowd of figures silently enter the clearing from all sides. All are dressed in Southern costumes of the period of the fifties of the last century. There are middle-aged men who are evidently well-to-do planters. There is one spruce, authoritative individual—the AUCTIONEER. There are a crowd of curious spectators, chiefly young belles and dandies who have come to the slave-market for diversion. All exchange courtly greetings in dumb show and chat silently together. There is something stiff, rigid, unreal, marionettish about their movements. They group themselves about the stump. Finally a batch of slaves are led in from the left by an attendant—three men of different ages, two women, one with a baby in her arms, nursing. They are placed to the left of the stump, beside JONES.*]

The white planters look them over appraisingly as if they were cattle, and exchange judgments on each. The dandies point with their fingers and make witty remarks. The belles titter bewitchingly. All this in silence save for the ominous throb of the tom-tom. The AUCTIONEER holds up his hand, taking his

place at the stump. The groups strain forward attentively. He touches JONES on the shoulder peremptorily, motioning for him to stand on the stump—the auction block.

JONES looks up, sees the figures on all sides, looks wildly for some opening to escape, sees none, screams and leaps madly to the top of the stump to get as far away from them as possible. He stands there, cowering, paralyzed with horror. The AUCTIONEER begins his silent spiel. He points to JONES, appeals to the planters to see for themselves. Here is a good field hand, sound in wind and limb as they can see. Very strong still in spite of his being middle-aged. Look at that back. Look at those shoulders. Look at the muscles in his arms and his sturdy legs. Capable of any amount of hard labor. Moreover, of a good disposition, intelligent and tractable. Will any gentleman start the bidding? The planters raise their fingers, make their bids. They are apparently all eager to possess JONES. The bidding is lively, the crowd interested. While this has been going on, JONES has been seized by the courage of desperation. He dares to look down and around him. Over his face abject terror gives way to mystification, to gradual realization—stutteringly.]

What you all doin', white folks? What's all dis? What you all lookin' at me fo'? What you doin' wid me, anyhow? [*suddenly convulsed with raging hatred and fear.*] Is dis an auction? Is you sellin' me like dey uster befo' de war? [*jerking out his revolver just as the AUCTIONEER knocks him down to one of the planters; glaring from him to the purchaser.*] And you sells me? And you buys me? I shows you I'se a free nigger, damn yo' souls!

[*He fires at the AUCTIONEER and at the PLANTER with such rapidity that the two shots are almost simultaneous. As if this were a signal, the walls of the forest fold in. Only blackness remains and silence broken by JONES as he rushes off, crying with fear—and by the quickened, ever louder beat of the tom-tom.*]

SCENE VI.

Three o'clock. A cleared space in the forest. The limbs of the trees meet over it forming a low ceiling about five feet from the ground. The interlocked ropes of creepers reaching upward to entwine the three trunks give an arched appearance to the sides. The space thus enclosed is like the dark, noisome hold of some ancient vessel. The moonlight is almost completely shut out and only a vague, wan light filters through. There is a noise of someone approaching from the left, stumbling and crawling through the undergrowth. JONES' voice is heard between chattering moans.

Oh, Lawd, what I gwine do now? Ain't got no bullet left, on'y de silver one. If mo' o' dem ha'nts come after me, how I gwine skeer dem away? Oh, Lawd, on'y de silver one left—an' I gotta save dat fo' luck. If I shoots dat one, I'm a goner sho'! Lawd, it's black heah! Whar's de moon? Oh, Lawd, don't dis night evah come to an end? [*by the sounds, he is feeling his way cautiously forward.*] Dere! Dis feels like a clear space. I gotta lie down an' rest. I don't care if dem niggers does cotch me. I gotta rest.

[*He is well forward now where his figure can be dimly made out. His pants have been so torn away that what is left of them is no better than a breech cloth. He flings himself full length, face downward on the ground,*

panting with exhaustion. Gradually it seems to grow lighter in the enclosed space and two rows of seated figures can be seen behind JONES. They are sitting in crumpled, despairing attitudes hunched, facing one another with their backs touching the forest walls as if they were shackled to them. All are negroes, naked save for loin cloths. At first they are silent and motionless. Then they begin to sway slowly forward toward each and back again in unison, as if they were lazily letting themselves follow the long roll of a ship at sea. At the same time, a low, melancholy murmur rises among them, increasing gradually by rhythmic degrees which seem to be directed and controlled by the throb of the tom-tom in the distance, to a long, tremulous wail of despair that reaches a certain pitch, unbearably acute, then falls by slow gradations of tone into silence and is taken up again. JONES starts, looks up, sees the figures, and throws himself down again to shut out the sight. A shudder of terror shakes his whole body as the wail rises up about him again. But the next time, his voice, as if under some uncanny compulsion, starts with the others. As their chorus lifts, he rises to a sitting posture similar to the others, swaying back and forth. His voice reaches the highest pitch of sorrow, of desolation. The light fades out, the other voices cease, and only darkness is left. JONES can be heard scrambling to his feet and running off, his voice sinking down the scale and receding as he moves farther and farther away in the forest. The tom-tom beats louder, quicker, with a more insistent, triumphant pulsation.]

SCENE VII.

Five o'clock. The foot of a gigantic tree by the edge of a great river. A rough structure of boulders, like an altar, is by the tree. The raised river-bank is in the nearer background. Beyond this the surface of the river spreads out, brilliant and unruffled in the moonlight, blotted out and merged into a veil of bluish mist in the distance. JONES' voice is heard from the left rising and falling in the long, despairing wail of the chained slaves, to the rhythmic beat of the tom-tom. As his voice sinks into silence, he enters the open space. The expression of his face is fixed and stony, his eyes have an obsessed glare, he moves with a strange deliberation like a sleep-walker or one in a trance. He looks around at the tree, the rough stone altar, the moonlit surface of the river beyond, and passes his hand over his head with a vague gesture of puzzled bewilderment. Then, as if in obedience to some obscure impulse, he sinks into a kneeling, devotional posture before the altar. Then he seems to come to himself partly, to have an uncertain realization of what he is doing, for he straightens up and stares about him horrifiedly; in an incoherent mumble.

What—what is I doin'? What is—dis place? Seems like—seems like I know dat tree—an' dem stones—an' de river. I remember—seems like I been heah befo'. [tremblingly.] Oh, Gorry, I'se skeered in dis place! I'se skeered! Oh, Lawd, pertect dis sinner!

[Crawling away from the altar, he cowers close to the ground, his face hidden, his shoulders heaving with sobs of hysterical fright. From behind the trunk of the tree, as if he had sprung out of it, the figure of the CONGO WITCH-DOCTOR appears. He is wizened and old, naked except for the fur of some small animal tied about his waist, its bushy tail hanging down in front. His body is stained all

over a bright red. Antelope horns are on each side of his head, branching upward. In one hand he carries a bone rattle, in the other a charm stick with a bunch of white cockatoo feathers tied to the end. A great number of glass beads and bone ornaments are about his neck, ears, wrists, and ankles. He struts noiselessly with a queer prancing step to a position in the clear ground between JONES and the altar. Then with a preliminary, summoning stamp of his foot on the earth, he begins to dance and to chant. As if in response to his summons, the beating of the tom-tom grows to a fierce, exultant boom whose throbs seem to fill the air with vibrating rhythm. JONES looks up, starts to spring to his feet, reaches a half-kneeling, half-squatting position and remains rigidly fixed there, paralyzed with awed fascination by this new apparition. The WITCH-DOCTOR sways, stamping with his foot, his bone rattle clicking the time. His voice rises and falls in a weird, monotonous croon, without articulate word divisions. Gradually his dance becomes clearly one of a narrative in pantomime, his croon is an incantation, a charm to allay the fierceness of some implacable deity demanding sacrifice. He flees, he is pursued by devils, he hides, he flees again. Ever wilder and wilder becomes his flight, nearer and nearer draws the pursuing evil, more and more the spirit of terror gains possession of him. His croon, rising to intensity, is punctuated by shrill cries. JONES has become completely hypnotized. His voice joins in the incantation, in the cries, he beats time with his hands and sways his body to and fro from the waist. The whole spirit and meaning

of the dance has entered into him, has become his spirit. Finally the theme of the pantomime halts on a howl of despair, and is taken up again on a note of savage hope. There is a salvation. The forces of evil demand sacrifice. They must be appeased. The WITCH-DOCTOR points with his wand to the sacred tree, to the river beyond, to the altar, and finally to JONES with a ferocious command. JONES seems to sense the meaning of this. It is he who must offer himself for sacrifice. He beats his forehead abjectly to the ground, moaning hysterically.]

Mercy, Oh Lawd! Mercy! Mercy on dis po' sinner.

[The WITCH-DOCTOR springs to the river bank. He stretches out his arms and calls to some God within its depths. Then he starts backward slowly, his arms remaining out. A huge head of a crocodile appears over the bank and its eyes, glittering greenly fasten upon JONES. He stares into them fascinatedly. The WITCH-DOCTOR prances up to him, touches him with his wand, motions with hideous command toward the waiting monster. JONES squirms on his belly nearer and nearer, moaning continually.]

Mercy, Lawd! Mercy!

[The crocodile heaves more of his enormous hulk onto the land. JONES squirms toward him. The WITCH-DOCTOR's voice shrills out in furious exultation, the tom-tom beats madly. JONES cries out in a fierce, exhausted spasm of anguished pleading.]

Lawd, save me! Lawd Jesus, heah my prayer!

[Immediately, in answer to his prayer, comes the thought of the one bullet left him. He

snatches at his hip, shouting defiantly.]

De silver bullet! You don't git me yit!

[He fires at the green eyes in front of him. The head of the crocodile sinks back behind the river bank, the WITCH-DOCTOR springs back behind the sacred tree and disappears. JONES lies with his face to the ground, his arms outstretched, whimpering with fear as the throb of the tom-tom fills the silence about him with a somber pulsation, a baffled but revengeful power.]

SCENE VIII.

Dawn. Same as Scene II, the dividing line of forest and plain. The nearest tree trunks are dimly revealed but the forest behind them is still a mass of glooming shadow. The tom-tom seems on the very spot, so loud and continuously vibrating are its beats. LEM enters from the left, followed by a small squad of his soldiers, and by the Cockney trader, SMITHERS. LEM is a heavy-set, ape-faced old savage of the extreme African type, dressed only in a loin cloth. A revolver and cartridge belt are about his waist. His soldiers are in different degrees of rag-concealed nakedness. All wear broad palm-leaf hats. Each one carries a rifle. SMITHERS is the same as in Scene I. One of the soldiers, evidently a tracker, is peering about keenly on the ground. He grunts and points to the spot where JONES entered the forest. LEM and SMITHERS come to look.

SMITHERS. [after a glance, turns away in disgust.] That's where 'e went in right enough. Much good it'll do yer. 'E's miles orf by this an' safe to the coast—damn's 'ide! I tole yer yer'd lose 'im, didn't I?—wastin' the 'ole bloomin' night beatin' yer bloody drum and castin' yer silly spells! Gawd blimey, wot a pack!

LEM. [*gutturally.*] We cotch him. You see.

[*He makes a motion to his soldiers who squat down on their haunches in a semicircle.*]

SMITHERS. [*turning away from him contemptuously.*] Aw! Garn! 'E's a better man than the lot o' you put together. I 'ates the sight o' 'im but I'll say that for 'im.

[*A sound of snapping twigs comes from the forest. The soldiers jump to their feet, cocking their rifles alertly. LEM remains sitting with an imperturbable expression, but listening intently. The sound from the woods is repeated. LEM makes a quick signal with his hand. His followers creep quickly but noiselessly into the forest, scattering so that each enters at a different spot.*]

SMITHERS. [*in the silence that follows, in a contemptuous whisper.*] You ain't thinkin' that would be 'im, I 'ope?

LEM. [*calmly.*] We cotch him.

SMITHERS. Blarsted fat-'eads! [*then after a second's thought; wonderingly.*] Still an' all, it might 'appen. If 'e lost 'is bloody way in these stinkin' woods, 'e'd likely turn in a circle without 'is knowin' it. They all does.

LEM. [*peremptorily.*] Sssh! [*the reports of several rifles sound from the forest, followed a second later by savage, exultant yells; the beating of the tom-tom abruptly ceases; LEM looks up at the white man with a grin of satisfaction.*] We cotch him. Him dead.

SMITHERS. [*with a snarl.*] 'Ow d'yer know it's 'im an' 'ow d'yer know 'e's dead?

LEM. My mens dey got 'um silver bullets. Dey kill him shore.

SMITHERS. [*astonished.*] They got silver bullets?

LEM. Lead bullet no kill him. He got um strong charm. I cook um

money, make um silver bullet, make um strong charm, too.

SMITHERS. [*light breaking upon him.*] So that's wot you was up to all night, wot? You was scared to put after 'im till you'd moulded silver bullets, eh?

LEM. [*simply stating a fact.*] Yes. Him got strong charm. Lead no good.

SMITHERS. [*slapping his thigh and guffawing.*] Haw-haw! If yer don't beat all 'ell! [*then recovering himself; scornfully.*] I'll bet yer it ain't 'im they shot at all, yer bleedin' looney!

LEM. [*calmly.*] Dey come bring him now.

[*The soldiers come out of the forest, carrying JONES' limp body. There is a little reddish-purple hole under his left breast. He is dead. They carry him to LEM, who examines his body with great satisfaction. SMITHERS leans over his shoulder.*]

SMITHERS. [*in a tone of frightened awe.*] Well, they did for yer right enough, Jonesey, me lad! Dead as a 'errin! [*mockingly.*] Where's yer 'igh an' mighty airs now, yer bloomin' Majesty? [*then with a grin.*] Silver bullets! Gawd blimey, but yer died in the 'eight o' style, any'ow!

[*LEM makes a motion to the soldiers to carry the body out left. SMITHERS speaks to him sneeringly.*]

SMITHERS. And I s'pose you think it's yer bleedin' charms and yer silly beatin' the drum that made 'im run in a circle when 'e'd lost 'imself, don't yer? [*but LEM makes no reply, does not seem to hear the question, walks out after his men; SMITHERS looks after him with contemptuous scorn.*] Stupid as 'ogs, the lot of 'em! Blarsted niggers!

[*Curtain Falls.*]

CHAPTER X

THE ONE-ACT PLAY

Like the short story, the one-act play is, in one sense, very old; and, in another, very new. The Greek tragedies and the medieval miracle plays were one-act plays of a kind, but the one-act play was not cultivated as a separate dramatic form till near the end of the nineteenth century. No adequate study of the short play appeared until Percival Wilde published *The Craftsmanship of the One-act Play* in 1923. In recent years collections of one-act plays have appeared in large numbers to meet an unprecedented demand from the little theaters. New though it is, the one-act play is now well established as a dramatic form.

In European countries during the late nineteenth century the one-act play was used as a "curtain raiser." The producer preferred to begin his performance with a short play because so many of the fashionable came late to the theater. The short play was deliberately sacrificed in order to save the long play. The one-act play has been extensively used on the vaudeville stage but not with satisfactory results. The miscellaneous vaudeville audience is seldom willing to sit through a serious play which it, of course, did not come to the theater to see. The regular theaters are not very hospitable to the short play; for an evening's bill of one-act plays is much more difficult to advertise than a single play by a well-known playwright with a popular actress as the leading lady.

In the United States the one-act play has come into its own with the extraordinary multiplication of little theaters in the past ten or fifteen years. (See Chapter IX.) America now bids fair to excel in the one-act play as it has long excelled in the short story. Our closest rival is probably Ireland. But for the one-act play, the little theaters would have found their work much more difficult; and without the little theaters, the one-act play would have remained comparatively undeveloped. The short play was a great boon to the little theaters because it is easy to memorize and easy to stage; it requires neither elaborate scenery nor a large cast. The little theater furnished an intelligent audience, willing to listen to plays dealing with ideas, and it opened a large and fertile field for experiment. The one-act play offers special advantages to the would-be playwright. Though not easier to write than the long play, it can be written in far less time. Moreover, it need not be composed of the conventional ingredients usually demanded in the commercial theater. "The one-act play," says Percival Wilde, "has been the standard bearer of the modern drama." Its success in the little theaters has compelled the managers of the commercial theaters to introduce some much needed changes. David Belasco, once distinctly hostile to the movement, now sponsors an annual little theater tournament. The little theater has discovered and developed actors of great talent, and it has enabled dramatists like Susan Glaspell and Eugene O'Neill, beginning with short plays, to find their true vocation. Directors of college workshops, like Professor Frederick H. Koch, have, working with one-act plays, developed playwrights like Paul Green, whose two volumes, *The Lord's Will* and *Lonesome Road*, contain some of the best one-act plays yet written.

The term *one-act play* is convenient but inexact. It is applied to all brief plays that can be played in an hour or less, regardless of the number of acts and scenes. Lord Dunsany's *King Argimenes and the Unknown Warrior*, in two acts, is, in this sense, a one-act play. Even his *The Gods of the Mountain*, in three acts, and O'Neill's *The Emperor Jones*, in eight scenes, are sometimes classed as one-act plays. But full-length plays, without act or scene division, like Shaw's *Getting Married* and *Misalliance*, are not, properly speaking, one-act plays. The chief criterion is one of length. No play long enough to make up an evening's performance should be called a one-act play.

The brevity of the one-act play is chiefly responsible for other respects in which it differs from the long play. In the brief space of an hour or less allotted to him the playwright must limit his story to a single episode and develop this, if possible, without change of scene. He finds himself limited to fewer characters and unable to portray any of them at full length. These limitations call for the greatest economy of means, but they give the short play a unity, a singleness of effect, which the long play rarely attains. A one-act play must be well constructed or it is a conspicuous failure. The principle which Poe laid down for the short story is equally applicable to the one-act play. The writer should strive, said Poe, for "a certain unique or single effect to be wrought out. . . . In the whole composition there should be no word written, of which the tendency, direct or indirect, is not to the one pre-established design." To attain this unique effect, the play must be compact, clear, and rapid in movement. The exposition of antecedent events must be brief; the story must begin to unfold almost immediately, must move swiftly to its climax, and must close without delay. The qualities demanded of the playwright are originality, ingenuity, and skill in compression.

The one-act play, like the short story, favors the romantic method. The characters should be striking, and the story unusual, poetic, or fanciful. The method is impressionistic, suggestive, like that of the poet. It would probably destroy the charm of *The Land of Heart's Desire* to expand it into a four-act play; and a full-length play on the theme of *Riders to the Sea* would be almost intolerable. The writer of one-act plays deals with a crisis, a single impressive moment, a significant trait of character; he does not try to see life steadily and see it whole. He may show us a tragedy in an unsuspected place, as in *Trifles*; romance in a commonplace environment, as in *The Land of Heart's Desire*; a glimpse of a strange aspect of life, as in *Riders to the Sea*. He may present an unusual character like the man in Tchekoff's *The Boor*, or the father in Henry Arthur Jones's *The Goal*; he may ridicule a fad, as in Susan Glaspell's *Suppressed Desires*; or he may suggest an idea, as in George Middleton's *Tradition*. The effect aimed at usually subordinates two of the three elements—plot, characters, and setting—to the third. In *Riders to the Sea* the setting dominates; in *The Twelve-pound Look* the character of the first wife holds the center of our interest; in *A Night at an Inn* an unsuspected *dénouement* constitutes the effect at which the dramatist aims.

THE GOAL *

A DRAMATIC FRAGMENT

HENRY ARTHUR JONES

CHARACTERS

SIR STEPHEN FAMARISS, *the great Engineer.*

DANIEL FAMARISS, *his son, Engineer.*

SIR LYDDEN CRANE, M.D.

ADAMS, *SIR STEPHEN'S Butler.*

PEGGIE LOVEL.

NURSE CLANDON.

SCENE—*The dressing-room of SIR STEPHEN FAMARISS, Belgrave Square. A very richly furnished apartment, with every evidence of wealth and luxury. Up stage, right, an archway, set diagonally, shows a bedroom beyond with foot of brass bedstead placed sideways to audience. The bedroom is dimly lighted. A large bow-window, rather deeply recessed, runs along the left at back, and looks across a courtyard to another house, whose windows are brilliantly lighted. Figures dancing are seen moving across the windows in accordance with indications given through the play. Between archway and window a large handsome bureau. A door left, down stage. Down stage, right, fireplace with fire burning. A mirror over fireplace. A large comfortable sofa, down stage, right. A table left of sofa near centre of stage, with bottle of champagne and glasses on it. Another table up stage, left, above door. Upon it medicine bottles, spirit lamp, and other paraphernalia of a sick-room. A large pier looking-glass up stage above sofa. Other furniture as required, all indicating great wealth and comfort. Time, about ten on an April evening in 1897.*

[*Discover on sofa, asleep, SIR STEPHEN FAMARISS. A rug is thrown over him, and his head is buried in a pillow, so that nothing is seen of him but a figure under the rug. NURSE CLANDON, in nurse's costume, about thirty, is seated in chair at table, reading. The door, left, is very softly opened, and SIR LYDDEN CRANE enters, a little, dry, shrewd, wizened old man about seventy, with manners of a London physician. NURSE rises and puts down her book.*]

CRANE. Well? How has he been all the afternoon?

NURSE. Just as usual. He won't keep quiet. About an hour ago he fell asleep. [*Points to SIR STEPHEN.*]

CRANE. Mr. Daniel Famariss has not arrived?

NURSE. No. He sent another telegram for him this evening. And he keeps on asking for the evening papers.

CRANE. Well?

NURSE. I've kept them from him. They all have long accounts of his illness. [*taking an evening paper from under the table cover, giving it to CRANE.*] Look!

CRANE. [*taking paper, reading.*] "Sir Stephen Famariss, the great engineer, is dying—" Hum!

[*A very gentle knock is heard at door left. NURSE goes to it, opens it. ADAMS comes in a step.*]

ADAMS. I beg pardon. Mrs. Lovel has sent in to ask how Sir Stephen is; and to say that she's very sorry the ballroom is so near his bedroom; and if the noise of the ball will upset Sir

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Stephen, she'll be very pleased to put it off, and send her guests away.

NURSE. What do you think, Sir Lydden?

CRANE. All excitement is very dangerous for Sir Stephen. The next attack may be fatal. Will you give my compliments to Mrs. Lovel, and say that, since she is so kind, I will beg her to postpone the ball.

[SIR STEPHEN *stirs, throws off the quilt. He is in a rich dressing-gown. A wiry, handsome, very intellectual-looking man about seventy-five; well-seasoned, vigorous frame; pale sharp strong features, showing signs of great recent pain.*]

SIR STEPHEN. Will you give my compliments to Mrs. Lovel, and say that, since she is so kind, I will beg her to do nothing of the kind. What rubbish, Crane! Because I happen to be dying, to stop the innocent pleasure of a couple of hundred young people! Thank Mrs. Lovel very much, Adams, for sending in, and say that I'm not at all sure that I shall die to-night; but that if I do, her dancing won't in the least interfere with my dying, and I hope she won't allow my dying to interfere with her dancing. I very much wish the ball to take place. [*very impatiently.*] It's not to be put off! You understand?

ADAMS. Yes, Sir Stephen. [*Going.*]

SIR STEPHEN. And, Adams, give my compliments to Mrs. Lovel, and say that, if she doesn't mind, I should like to see Miss Lovel in her ball dress for a moment before the ball. Say that I'm quite presentable, and I won't frighten Miss Lovel. [*Exit ADAMS.*]

Well, Crane, am I going off this time?

CRANE. This last attack coming so quickly after the other is very alarming, and—very dangerous.

SIR STEPHEN. Yes, but am I going to pull through again, or must I put up the shutters?

CRANE. Well—well—

SIR STEPHEN. [*seeing paper on table where CRANE has put it.*] Is that to-

night's paper. [*no reply.*] Give it to me.

CRANE. [*deprecatingly.*] Famariss—
SIR STEPHEN. Give it to me. [*CRANE gives it to him reluctantly; reading from paper.*] "Alarming illness of Sir Stephen Famariss. Angina pectoris. Fatal symptoms. Sir Stephen Famariss, the great engineer, is dying—" There's nothing like making sure of your facts.

CRANE. Too sure!

SIR STEPHEN. [*drily.*] So I think. What do you say? How long am I going to live?

CRANE. Well—

SIR STEPHEN. Come out with it, old friend. I'm not afraid to hear.

CRANE. With the greatest care, I see no reason why you shouldn't live some weeks—or months.

SIR STEPHEN. Shall I live long enough to carry out my Milford Haven scheme? Tell me the truth.

CRANE. No. You certainly won't.

SIR STEPHEN. [*shows intense disappointment.*] You're sure?

CRANE. I'm sure.

SIR STEPHEN. Shall I live long enough to start it, to put it into other hands, into my son's hands—if the rebellious fool will only learn wisdom and make it up with me before I die? I shall live long enough for that?

CRANE. No. I fear not.

SIR STEPHEN. [*going to bureau.*] But I've got a third of it on paper. [*taking out plans.*] I've kept it here. I've worked at it when I couldn't sleep. If I can last out another six months, I can do it. Come, Crane, don't be stingy. Give me another six months! Eh!

CRANE. Famariss, you won't last six months even with the greatest care. You may not last six weeks—

SIR STEPHEN. Nor six days?

CRANE. Nor six days.

SIR STEPHEN. Nor six hours?

CRANE. Oh—!

SIR STEPHEN. Nor six hours. Thank you. I'm prepared.

CRANE. Your son hasn't come yet?

SIR STEPHEN. No. I've telegraphed him twice—and my terms.

CRANE. Is it worth while—of course, you know best—is it worth while to stick out for terms when—

SIR STEPHEN. When one is in face of death. Yes—on a matter of principle. If Dan comes here, he comes on my terms. I'll keep my word; I won't set eyes on him—he shan't pass that door until he owns he was wrong.

CRANE. But—

SIR STEPHEN. [*getting excited.*] But he was wrong. He was wrong, and no power on earth shall make me—

CRANE. [*soothing him.*] Hush! If he does come, you must avoid all excitement in meeting him. Your only chance of prolonging your life is to keep absolutely quiet. You must lay up all day—

SIR STEPHEN. Lay up all day! Don't talk nonsense!

CRANE. If you don't—

SIR STEPHEN. If I don't—

CRANE. You may die at any moment.

SIR STEPHEN. But if I do, I'm dead already. No, Crane, I'll live to my last moment, whenever it comes. When I do take to my bed, I'll take to it once for all, in the churchyard, beside my Peggie! [*very softly, very tenderly, half to himself.*] My Peggie! My Peggie! If I do go off, I shall see her again, I suppose—if it isn't all moonshine! Open the window, Nurse! It's getting hot here! [*the NURSE opens window.*] Open that champagne, Crane, and pour yourself out a glass, and pour me out a glass. My Peggie! My Peggie! I wonder if it is all moonshine! [*the musicians in the ballroom opposite begin to tune up their fiddles; NURSE comes down.*] That's right! Tune up! Tune up! And Peggie Lovel promised me the first dance! Tune up!

NURSE. You must keep quiet—

SIR STEPHEN. [*pettishly.*] Run away! Run away! [*CRANE makes NURSE a sign, and she goes off into bedroom; CRANE has opened the champagne and poured out two glasses; he brings one to SIR STEPHEN.*] It's the eighty-four

Saint Marceaux. I've left you half what's left of this, Crane, and I've left my mule of a boy the other half. He's my heir. I won't see him; no, not if I—

CRANE. Hush! Hush!

SIR STEPHEN. I won't see him unless he submits. But I've left him every penny, except what goes to charities and churches. It's very puzzling to know what to do with one's money, Crane. I've left a heap to charities, and I've squared all the churches. I hope it won't do much harm. [*a little chuckle.*] There's one thing I regret in dying, Crane: I shan't be able to hear my funeral sermons. But you will—

CRANE. Don't make too sure. I may go off first; but if I am doomed, I hope the oratory will be of as good a vintage as this.

SIR STEPHEN. It ought to be, considering what I've left them all. Give them a hint, Crane, not to whitewash my sepulchre with any lying cant. Don't let them make a plaster-of-Paris saint of me! I won't have it! I won't have it! I've been a man, and never less than a man. I've never refused to do the work that came in my way, and, thank God, I've never refused to taste a pleasure. And I've had a rare good time in this rare good world. I wish I'd got to live it all over again!

CRANE. You do?

SIR STEPHEN. Yes; every moment of it, good and evil, pleasure and pain, love and work, success and failure, youth and age, I'd fill the cup again, and I'd drain it to the dregs if I could. You wouldn't?

CRANE. No. Once is enough for me.

SIR STEPHEN. You see, Crane, before starting in life, I took the one great step to secure success and happiness.

CRANE. What's that?

SIR STEPHEN. I made an excellent choice of my father and mother. Not rich. Not aristocratic. But a good, sound, healthy stock on both sides. What's the cause of all the weak, snivelling pessimism we hear? What's the cause of nine-tenths of the misery

around us—ruined lives; shattered health; physical, moral, intellectual beggary. What's the cause of doctor's bills?

CRANE. Well, what is it?

SIR STEPHEN. Men and women exercise no care in choosing their fathers and mothers. You doctors know it! You doctors know it! Once choose your father and mother wisely, and you can play all sorts of tricks with your constitution. You can drink your half-bottle of champagne at seventy-five and enjoy it! Another glass!

CRANE. No, I must be going! [*rising.*] And [*tapping bottle*] you mustn't take any more.

SIR STEPHEN. Don't talk nonsense! Sit down! Sit down! Another glass! Hobnob, man; hobnob! Life's but a span! Why, this may be the last time, eh?

CRANE. Any time may be the last time. Any moment may be the last moment.

SIR STEPHEN. Well, then, let's enjoy the last moment! I tell you, Crane, I'm ready. All my affairs are in perfect order. I should have liked to finish that Milford Haven scheme; but if it isn't to be—[*deep sigh.*]—Hobnob, man; hobnob!

CRANE. What a lovely wine!

SIR STEPHEN. Isn't it? I remember Goethe says that the man who drinks wine is damned, but the man who drinks bad wine is doubly damned. Pray God you and I may be only damned once, Crane.

CRANE. Oh, that's past praying for—in my case!

SIR STEPHEN. Eighty-four! I was boring a hole through the Rockies that summer—ah, Crane, what glorious summers I've had!—seventy-five glorious golden summers—and now—Hobnob, man; hobnob! You've had a good innings, too, Crane.

CRANE. Hum! Pretty fair. I eat well, drink well, sleep well, get my early morning jog in the Park and enjoy it, get my two months on the moors, and enjoy them. I feel as fit to-day as I did thirty years ago. There's only

one pleasure that fails me—[*with a grimace at SIR STEPHEN.*]—Gone! Gone! Gone!

SIR STEPHEN. Don't fret about that! We thought it a pleasure, old crony, while it lasted. Now it's gone, let's call it a plague and a sin, and thank God for giving us a little peace in our old age. Ah, dear, dear, what a havoc women have made of the best half of my life; but—[*brightening*]—I've left some good work behind me, in spite of the hussies! And, thank Heaven, my throat has held out to the last.

[*Drinking.*]

CRANE. [*drinking.*] And mine!

SIR STEPHEN. Crane, what was that joke that came up at poor Farley's funeral?

CRANE. Joke?

SIR STEPHEN. Don't you remember, while we were waiting for them to bring dear old Farley downstairs, Maidment began telling that story about the geese and the Scotch boy—

CRANE. Yes, yes; to be sure!

[*Beginning to laugh.*]

SIR STEPHEN. And just as we were enjoying the joke, we suddenly remembered where we were, and you pulled us up, and spoilt the joke!

CRANE. Yes, yes, I remember.

SIR STEPHEN. Crane, if Maidment tells that story at my funeral, don't pull him up—

CRANE. Eh?

SIR STEPHEN. It's a good joke, man! Don't waste it! Have your laugh out, and say from me that, other conditions being favourable, I'm enjoying it as heartily as any of you! You will, eh? You will?

CRANE. Yes, I will! I will!

[*They both laugh a little.*]

ADAMS opens door left, and comes in a step.]

ADAMS. Miss Lovel has come, Sir Stephen.

SIR STEPHEN. Show her in, Adams.

[*Exit ADAMS.*]

CRANE. I must be going.

[*Re-enter ADAMS, showing in PEGGIE LOVEL, a débutante of eighteen, in her first ball dress;*

radiant, excited, beautifully dressed, a vision of girlish loveliness. She is frivolous and self-conscious, and full of little airs and graces, constantly glancing at herself in the two mirrors.]

ADAMS. [announcing.] Miss Lovel.

[Exit ADAMS.]

SIR STEPHEN. Come in, Peggie. I mustn't call you Peggie any more. Come in, Miss Lovel.

PEGGIE. Mamma said you would like to see me for a minute before the ball!

SIR STEPHEN. If you don't mind.

PEGGIE. How d'ye do, Sir Lydden?
[Shaking hands.]

CRANE. How d'ye do, Miss Lovel? Good-night, Sir Stephen.

[Holding out hand.]

SIR STEPHEN. Don't go, old chum.

[Taking his hand, retaining it, keeping him.]

CRANE. I must. [taking out watch.] I have a consultation at eleven.

SIR STEPHEN. [piteously.] Don't go, old chum.

CRANE. It's really pressing. It's Lord Albert Swale. He won't last till the morning.

SIR STEPHEN. Don't go. I may be meeting him soon, and I'll make your apologies. [very piteously.] Don't go, old chum!

CRANE. I must. [Nurse enters from bedroom.] Nurse, I want a word with you downstairs. [Nurse crosses to left, and exits; to SIR STEPHEN.] I'll look in, the first thing in the morning.

SIR STEPHEN. Do. You'll find me—at home.

CRANE. Good-night. Good-night, Miss Lovel.

PEGGIE. Good-night, Sir Lydden.

CRANE. [in a low tone to PEGGIE.] You mustn't stay long, and you mustn't let Sir Stephen excite himself. [to SIR STEPHEN.] I'd rather see you in bed—

SIR STEPHEN. [very impatiently.] Tut! Tut! Tut! I won't be buried before I'm dead. [rather curtly.] Good-night. [Crane waits; imperiously.] Good-night! [CRANE is going.] And,

Crane, remember—no whitewash on my sepulchre!

[Exit CRANE. PEGGIE meantime has taken off her cloak. All through she is eager and excited, glances at herself in the glasses very often.]

PEGGIE. I'm so sorry you're ill, Sir Stephen.

SIR STEPHEN. I'm not ill, my dear. The old machine seems just as strong and tough as ever, only—it's gone "crack" in a weak place. Well, I've knocked it about all over the world for seventy-five years, and if it hadn't gone crack in one place, I suppose it would in another. Never mind me. Let's talk about you. Go and stand there, and let me look at you.

PEGGIE. [displaying her dress.] Do you like me? Do you like my dress?

SIR STEPHEN. It's a triumph!

PEGGIE. [chattering on.] You can't imagine what trouble mamma and I have taken over it. Long sleeves are coming in for evening wear. So I had long sleeves at first. I was all sleeves. So I had them out and short sleeves put in. The dressmaker made a horrible muddle of them. So we tried long sleeves again. I looked a perfect fright!

SIR STEPHEN. I won't believe it.

PEGGIE. Yes, I did, I assure you. So at the last moment I had the long sleeves taken out and the short sleeves dodged up with lace. Which do you like best? Long sleeves or short sleeves?

SIR STEPHEN. Long sleeves for ugly arms—short sleeves for beautiful arms!

PEGGIE. [frowning at him and shaking her head.] Ah! What do you think of the bodice?

SIR STEPHEN. Enchanting!

PEGGIE. It is rather neat, isn't it?

SIR STEPHEN. Neat? I should call it gorgeous!

PEGGIE. Oh, you must see the one I've got for the Lardners' dance next Monday. Would you like to see it?

SIR STEPHEN. Very much—on Monday.

PEGGIE. I'll run in for a moment before I go.

SIR STEPHEN. Do.

PEGGIE. That's a square-cut bodice. This is a round-cut bodice. Which do you like best? Round-cut bodices, or square-cut bodices?

SIR STEPHEN. To-night I like round-cut bodices. On Monday I think I shall prefer square-cut bodices.

PEGGIE. I think I prefer a square-cut bodice. I had a square-cut bodice to this at first. I looked a perfect monster, so I had it taken out and this round-cut bodice put on. I'm not sure that it's quite right now, and I've tried it on fifty times—I'm worrying you to death.

SIR STEPHEN. No! no!

PEGGIE. Yes, I am, and I can't stay five minutes. Are you sure you wouldn't rather have the ball put off? We will put it off even now, if you wish.

SIR STEPHEN. Not for the world! not for the world!

PEGGIE. That's so good of you! But I really think you'll be better to-morrow. I'm sure you will. You aren't really very ill, are you? Do you like this embroidery?

[*Pointing to trimming on her skirt.*]

SIR STEPHEN. It's beautiful! Isn't it Indian work?

PEGGIE. Yes; handmade. It took a man twelve or fifteen years to make this one strip.

SIR STEPHEN. A quarter of a lifetime to decorate you for a few hours. It was time well spent. Ah, Peggie, that's the sum and meaning of all our toil and money-grubbing!

PEGGIE. What is?

SIR STEPHEN. To make our women-folk beautiful. It all comes to that in the end. Let Nature and Art knock their heads together till doomsday, they'll never teach one another any finer trick than to show a beautiful maiden to a handsome young fellow, or a handsome young fellow to a beautiful maiden.

[*PEGGIE has got behind him and is admiring herself in the glass.*]

PEGGIE. Really! Really! Yes, I suppose you're right. You're sure I'm not worrying you—

SIR STEPHEN. No, no. Don't go. I'm quite at leisure now to the end of my life.

PEGGIE. Oh, you mustn't talk like that! So I may tell mamma that you like my dress? What do you think of the skirt?

SIR STEPHEN. Isn't there too much trimming on it?

PEGGIE. Oh, no! Oh, no!

SIR STEPHEN. Yes, there's too much trimming.

PEGGIE. Oh, no! Oh, no! The dressmaker said there wasn't enough.

SIR STEPHEN. Stupid hussies, dressmakers! They're like other folks! They're the last to know anything about their own business. Tell your dressmaker that simplicity is the keynote of a great style in dressmaking and engineering—subtle simplicity. The next time she is going to make you a dress, tell her to take a walk through our National Gallery—

PEGGIE. Oh, Sir Stephen, you surely wouldn't dress me like those old guys in the National Gallery! What would my partners say?

SIR STEPHEN. Your partners! Ah, you pretty tyrant, you'll turn a great many heads, and set a great many hearts beating to-night!

PEGGIE. Shall I? Shall I?

SIR STEPHEN. Why, you've set my old worn-out heart fluttering, and, goodness knows, it ought to have done beating for pretty girls at seventy-five—it ought to know at seventy-five! But it doesn't, and—[*rising with great determination*—I've a great mind—

PEGGIE. [*a little alarmed.*] Sir Stephen, what are you going to do?

SIR STEPHEN. Don't you remember your promise?

PEGGIE. My promise?

SIR STEPHEN. Your birthday party six years ago! You danced with me, and you promised that I should be your first partner at your first ball after you came out!

PEGGIE. Of course—I'd forgotten!

SIR STEPHEN. But I haven't! Will you keep your promise, Peggie? Will you keep your promise?

PEGGIE. Wouldn't it be dangerous, and—you don't really wish it?

SIR STEPHEN. [*sinking down.*] You're right, my dear. I'm foolish with old age. Forgive me!

PEGGIE. I'm sorry to disappoint you. But you'll be able to see us dancing across the garden. You can stand at that window and look on.

SIR STEPHEN. Look on! That's all I'm fit for now—to look on at life!

[*Turning away his head.*]

PEGGIE. Sir Stephen, what's the matter?

SIR STEPHEN. I've always been in the thick of the fight, Peggie. And I feel to-night as strong as ever I did, and they tell me I must lay up and look on—[*rising with great energy and determination.*—I won't! I won't!

PEGGIE. Sir Stephen!

SIR STEPHEN. I can't bear it, Peggie. I've enjoyed my life, and I don't want to leave it. I want to live, and live, and live—and I will! Ah! what a selfish old coward I am! I'm like a man who has sat down to a good table d'hôte, and eaten and drunk his fill, and now the host tells me my place is wanted for another guest, I cry out and want to have my dinner over again! Don't take any notice of me, dear. Tell me about your partners. Who's going to dance with you to-night?

PEGGIE. Oh, I suppose Mr. Lascelles, Freddie Lister, Lord Doverbury, Johnny Butler, Sir Egerton Wendover, Dick French—amongst others.

SIR STEPHEN. Peggie—

PEGGIE. Yes—

SIR STEPHEN. You won't misunderstand me, dear. I'm old enough to be your grandfather. [*takes her hand very tenderly.*] You won't misunderstand me. [*very seriously.*] Take care how you choose your partner for life. You'll have a wide choice, and all your future happiness, and the happiness perhaps of many generations to come, will depend on the one moment when you say "Yes" to one of the scores of young

fellows who'll ask you to be his wife. Take care, dear! Take care! Look him thoroughly up and down! Be sure that he has a good full open eye that can look you straight in the face; and be sure that the whites of his eyes are clear. Take care he hasn't got a queer-shaped head, or a low forehead. A good round head, and a good full high forehead, do you hear! Notice the grip of his hand when he shakes hands with you! Take care it's strong and firm, and not cold and dry. No young man should have a cold, dry hand. Don't say "Yes" till you've seen him out of trousers, in riding dress, or court dress. Look at the shape of his legs—a good, well-shaped leg, eh, Peggie? And take care it is his leg! See that he's well-knit and a little lean, not flabby; doesn't squint; doesn't stammer; hasn't got any nervous tricks or twitches. Don't marry a bald man! They say we shall all be bald in ten generations. Wait ten generations, Peggie, and then don't marry a bald man! Can you remember all this, dear? Watch his walk! See that he has a good springy step, and feet made of elastic—can do his four or five miles an hour without turning a hair. Don't have him if he has a cough in the winter or the spring. Young men ought never to have a cough. And be sure he can laugh well and heartily—not a snigger, or a wheeze, or a cackle, but a good, deep, hearty laugh right down from the bottom of his chest. And if he has a little money, or even a good bit, so much the better! There now! You choose a man like that, Peggie, and I won't promise you that you'll be happy, but if you're not, it won't be your fault, and it won't be his, and it won't be mine!

PEGGIE. Very well, Sir Stephen, I'll try and remember.

SIR STEPHEN. Do, my dear, do! It's a good legacy, my dear. I've left you another. You won't be disappointed when my will's read—

PEGGIE. Oh, Sir Stephen!

SIR STEPHEN. No, you won't; but remember my advice to-night. That's the best wedding present for any girl.

PEGGIE. Very well, Sir Stephen! I must be going. Good-bye.

[*Giving her hand.*]

SIR STEPHEN. Yes, I suppose you mustn't stay. [*taking her hand, keeping it as he had kept CRANE'S, as if he couldn't bear to let her go.*] Good-bye.

[*Looking longingly at her with a mute entreaty to stay. PEGGIE draws her hand away, puts on cloak, and goes to door, left. He watches her all the while.*]

PEGGIE. [*at door, runs back to him.*] Sir Stephen, I'll keep my promise. You shall be my first partner. [*offering her card.*] Write your name down for my first dance.

SIR STEPHEN. But I shan't be there.

PEGGIE. I'll sit it out, and keep it for you.

SIR STEPHEN. No, no—

PEGGIE. Yes, yes! I insist. Put your name down!

[*He writes on her card.*]

[*Enter NURSE.*]

Good-bye, Sir Stephen.

SIR STEPHEN. Good-bye, Peggie! [*softly.*] Peggie! Her name was Peggie! My wife's name was Peggie!

[*She bends and kisses his forehead; then goes to door, turns and looks at him.*]

PEGGIE. Au 'voir.

[*Blows a kiss and exit. SIR STEPHEN looks longingly after her, walks a little up and down the room.*]

NURSE. [*anxiously.*] Sir Stephen, don't you think you might lie down now?

SIR STEPHEN. Run away! Run away!

NURSE. Won't you rest a little on the sofa?

SIR STEPHEN. Run away! Run away!

NURSE. Can I get you anything?

SIR STEPHEN. Run away! Run away! [*pacing up and down.*] Mr. Daniel Famariss hasn't come yet?

NURSE. No. You know they said that he was away surveying in an out-

of-the-way country, where no message could reach him.

SIR STEPHEN. If he should come too late, tell him—tell him—I've gone surveying in an out-of-the-way country—where no message can reach me! [*changing tone.*] Dear me, Nurse, I'm afraid this dying is going to be a very tiresome business for both of us!

NURSE. Oh, Sir Stephen, I'm sure I don't mind!

SIR STEPHEN. You don't mind? That's very good of you. You're in no hurry? Well, neither am I.

NURSE. Sir Stephen, don't you think—

SIR STEPHEN. What?

NURSE. Last night you said you'd send for a clergyman.

SIR STEPHEN. Did I? That was at two o'clock in the morning. How horribly demoralised a man gets at two o'clock in the morning!

NURSE. But, Sir Stephen—

SIR STEPHEN. Well?

NURSE. Don't you think you ought to begin to think of better things?

SIR STEPHEN. Well. I'm seventy-five. Perhaps it is nearly time. What better things?

NURSE. But, Sir Stephen—you will be judged.

SIR STEPHEN. Judged? Yes. But I shan't be judged by the prayers I've said and the psalms I've sung. I shan't be judged by the lies I've told, and the deceits I've practised, and the passions I've given way to. I shan't be judged by the evil and rottenness in me. No; I shall be judged by the railways I've made, and the canals I've scooped, and the bridges I've built—and let me tell you, my dear creature, my accounts are in good order, and ready for inspection at any moment, and I believe there's a good balance on my side.

[*Guests have been assembling in the ballroom; dance music bursts out; dancing begins.*]

Ah! what tune is that?

[*Goes up to window, begins dancing a few steps, swaying with the music.*]

NURSE. [*frightened.*] Sir Stephen! Sir Stephen!

SIR STEPHEN. Run away! Run away!

NURSE. Sir Stephen, you wouldn't be found dancing at the end?

SIR STEPHEN. Why not? I've done my work! Why shouldn't I play for a little while! [*a bell is heard.*] Hark! The front-door bell—

NURSE. Yes. [*Goes to door, left.*]

SIR STEPHEN. Go downstairs and see if that's my son. If it is, tell him—

[*Gentle knock at door left.*]

ADAMS enters a step. The dancing and music are continued in the ballroom.]

ADAMS. I beg pardon, Sir Stephen. Mr. Daniel Famariss has arrived—

SIR STEPHEN. Ah!

[*Getting excited.*]

ADAMS. And would like to see you.

SIR STEPHEN. Tell him he knows the conditions.

NURSE. But, Sir Stephen—

SIR STEPHEN. Run away, my good soul! Run away. [*to ADAMS.*] He knows the conditions. If he accepts them, I shall be pleased to see him.

DAN. [*voice outside door.*] Father!

SIR STEPHEN. Shut that door!

[*ADAMS very nearly closes door, which is kept open a few inches from the other side.*]

DAN. [*outside.*] Father! You won't shut the door in my face?

SIR STEPHEN. Keep on that side of it, then. Adams, you can go. Leave the door ajar.

[*Exit ADAMS, left.* SIR STEPHEN, with an imperious gesture, points NURSE to archway right. Exit NURSE, into bedroom with an appealing gesture to SIR STEPHEN. SIR STEPHEN goes to door; it is still open a few inches.]

Are you there, Dan?

DAN. [*outside.*] Yes, father.

SIR STEPHEN. I vowed I'd never set eyes on you again, till you owned you were wrong about those girders. You were wrong? [*no reply.*] You were wrong? [*no reply.*] Do you hear? Con-

found you, you know you were wrong! [*no reply.*] Do you hear, Dan? Why won't you say you were wrong? You won't! [*slams door, goes right, has an outburst of anger, recovers, listens, goes back to door, opens it a little.*] Are you there, Dan?

DAN. [*outside.*] Yes, father.

SIR STEPHEN. You were wrong, Dan. [*no reply.*] I haven't got long to live, Dan. It's angina pectoris, and the next attack will kill me. It may come at any moment. [*very piteously.*] Dan, you were wrong? Why won't you say so? Even if you tell a lie about it?

DAN. [*outside.*] I was wrong.

SIR STEPHEN. Ah! [*flings open the door, DAN runs in; SIR STEPHEN meets him, embraces him affectionately with a half sob.*] Why didn't you say it before? You knew how much I loved you. Why did you keep apart from me all these years?

DAN. I'm sorry, sir. But perhaps it was for the best. I've done very well.

SIR STEPHEN. Of course you have. You're my son. But how much better you'd have done if you had stuck to me! How much better we both should have done! I'm sorry, too, Dan. I was wrong, too—not about the girders. You were wrong about them, Dan. But I was wrong to be angry and to swear I wouldn't see you. Ah, what could I have done with you at my side! I could have carried out my Milford Haven scheme. Perhaps it isn't too late! [*going to bureau, getting more and more excited.*] I've got all the plans here—

[*Takes out a heap of plans.*]

DAN. Not now, father; not now!

SIR STEPHEN. Yes, now, my boy! To-morrow may be too late! [*going to table.*] Come here, my lad! Oh, Dan, what years we've wasted! Come here! I want you to carry this out. You'll have immense opposition. Beat it down! You'll have to buy Shadwell and his lot. They're a dirty gang. But you'll have to do it. I hate bribery, Dan; but when you've got to do it, do it thoroughly! Then there's Mincham.

Buy him over, if you can, at a small figure—say a thousand pounds—he's a mean little cur; but offer him that, and if he won't take it, snap your fingers at him, and swamp him! Remember the trick, the scoundrel's trick, he served me over the granite for the viaduct. Remember it, Dan, and don't spare him! Swamp him! Swamp him!

[*With great energy of hate.*]

DAN. Father—

SIR STEPHEN. Bring your chair up. I must go on now—while it's all before me! I want you to carry this Milford Haven scheme out! I want it to be said that what old Stephen Famariss couldn't do, young Dan Famariss could! The father was a great man, the son shall be a greater, eh? Look here, you must start on this side. I've had all the soundings made—

DAN. To-morrow, father; to-morrow!

SIR STEPHEN. No, now! There's no such thing as to-morrow! We'll go through it now—in case— There's a great world-tussle coming, Dan—I shan't live to see it—but it's coming, and the engineer that ties England and America will do a good turn to both

countries. England to America in four days! I want that crown to rest on your head! Look! You must begin here! Look! Just there! You must throw a bridge over—

[*Stops suddenly, puts his hand to his heart; his face indicates intense agony. NURSE enters from bedroom.*]

DAN. Father—

SIR STEPHEN. [*persisting, with a wild aimless gesture.*] Throw a bridge from here—to the other side, and then—

DAN. Father, what is it?

SIR STEPHEN. The end, Dan. [*his face shows that he is suffering great pain; a great burst of dance music; they offer to support him; he waves them off.*] No, thank you. I'll die standing. England to America in four days. [*long pause; he stands bolt upright with determination.*] You were wrong about those girders, Dan—My Peggie—I wonder if it's all moonshine—Peggie—My Peggie—

[*Dies, tumbles over table. Music and dancing in ball-room louder than ever.*]

[*Curtain.*]

THE LAND OF HEART'S DESIRE *

W. B. YEATS

O Rose, thou art sick.—*William Blake*

CHARACTERS

MAURTEEN BRUIN.
BRIDGET BRUIN.
SHAWN BRUIN.
MARY BRUIN.
FATHER HART.
A FAERY CHILD.

The scene is laid in the Barony of Kilmacowen, in the County of Sligo, and at a remote time!

[DEDICATION]

TO FLORENCE FARR

SCENE—A room with a hearth on the floor in the middle of a deep alcove to the Right. There are benches in the alcove and a table; and a crucifix on the wall. The alcove is full of a glow of light from the fire. There is an open door facing the audience to the Left, and to the left of this a bench. Through the door one can see the forest. It is night, but the moon or a late sunset glimmers through the trees and carries the eye far off into a vague, mysterious world. MAURTEEN BRUIN, SHAWN BRUIN, and BRIDGET BRUIN sit in the alcove at the table or about the fire. They are dressed in the costume of some remote time, and near them sits an old priest, FATHER HART. He may be dressed as a friar. There is food and drink upon the table. MARY BRUIN stands by the door reading a book. If she looks up she can see through the door into the wood.

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BRIDGET. Because I bid her clean the pots for supper.
She took that old book down out of the thatch,
She has been doubled over it ever since.
We should be deafened by her groans and moans,
Had she to work as some do, Father Hart,
Get up at dawn like me and mend and scour;
Or ride abroad in the boisterous night like you,
The pyx and blessed bread under your arm.
SHAWN. Mother, you are too cross.
BRIDGET. You've married her,
And fear to vex her, and so take her part.
MAURTEEN. [to FATHER HART.] It is but right that youth should side with youth;
She quarrels with my wife a bit at times,
And is too deep just now in the old book!
But do not blame her greatly; she will grow
As quiet as a puff-ball in a tree
When but the moons of marriage dawn and die
For half a score of times.
FATHER HART. Their hearts are wild,
As be the hearts of birds, till children come.
BRIDGET. She would not mind the kettle, milk the cow,
Or even lay the knives and spread the cloth.
SHAWN. Mother, if only—
MAURTEEN. Shawn, this is half empty;

Go, bring up the best bottle that we have.

FATHER HART. I never saw her read a book before,
What can it be?

MAURTEEN. [*to SHAWN.*] What are you waiting for?

You must not shake it when you draw the cork;

It's precious wine, so take your time about it. [*SHAWN goes.*]

[*To PRIEST.*] There was a Spaniard wrecked at Ocris Head,

When I was young, and I have still some bottles.

He cannot bear to hear her blamed; the book

Has lain up in the thatch these fifty years;

My father told me my grandfather wrote it,

And killed a heifer for the binding of it—

But supper's spread, and we can talk and eat.

It was little good he got out of the book,

Because it filled his house with rambling fiddlers,

And rambling ballad-makers and the like.

The griddle-bread is there in front of you.

Colleen, what is the wonder in that book,

That you must leave the bread to cool? Had I

Or had my father read or written books,

There was no stocking stuffed with yellow guineas

To come when I am dead to Shawn and you.

FATHER HART. You should not fill your head with foolish dreams.

What are you reading?

MARY. How a Princess Edane, A daughter of a King of Ireland, heard A voice singing on a May Eve like this, And followed, half awake and half asleep,

Until she came into the Land of Faery, Where nobody gets old and godly and grave,

Where nobody gets old and crafty and wise,

Where nobody gets old and bitter of tongue.

And she is still there, busied with a dance,

Deep in the dewy shadow of a wood, Or where stars walk upon a mountain-top.

MAURTEEN. Persuade the colleen to put down the book;

My grandfather would mutter just such things,

And he was no judge of a dog or a horse,

And any idle boy could blarney him; Just speak your mind.

FATHER HART. Put it away, my colleen.

God spreads the heavens above us like great wings,

And gives a little round of deeds and days,

And then come the wrecked angels and set snares,

And bait them with light hopes and heavy dreams,

Until the heart is puffed with pride and goes

Half shuddering and half joyous from God's peace;

And it was some wrecked angel, blind with tears,

Who flattered Edane's heart with merry words.

My colleen, I have seen some other girls

Restless and ill at ease, but years went by

And they grew like their neighbors and were glad

In minding children, working at the churn;

And gossiping of weddings and of wakes;

For life moves out of a red flare of dreams

Into a common light of common hours, Until old age bring the red flare again.

MAURTEEN. That's true—but she's too young to know it's true.

BRIDGET. She's old enough to know that it is wrong

To mope and idle.

MAURTEEN. I've little blame for her;
She's dull when my big son is in the
fields,
And that and maybe this good woman's
tongue
Have driven her to hide among her
dreams
Like children from the dark under the
bedclothes.

BRIDGET. She'd never do a turn if I
were silent.

MAURTEEN. And may be it is nat-
ural upon May Eve
To dream of the good people. But tell
me, girl,
If you've the branch of blessed quicken
wood
That women hang upon the post of
the door
That they may send good luck into
the house?

Remember they may steal new-married
brides

After the fall of twilight on May Eve,
Or what old women mutter at the fire
Is but a pack of lies.

FATHER HART. It may be truth.
We do not know the limit of those
powers

God has permitted to the evil spirits
For some mysterious end. You have
done right [to MARY].

It's well to keep old innocent customs
up.

[MARY BRUIN has taken a
bough of quicken wood from
a seat and hung it on a nail
in the door-post. A girl child
strangely dressed, perhaps in
faery green, comes out of the
wood and takes it away.]

MARY. I had no sooner hung it on
the nail

Before a child ran up out of the wind;
She has caught it in her hand and
fondles it;

Her face is pale as water before dawn.

FATHER HART. Whose child can this
be?

MAURTEEN. No one's child at all.
She often dreams that some one has
gone by,

When there was nothing but a puff of
wind.

MARY. They have taken away the
blessed quicken wood,
They will not bring good luck into the
house;

Yet I am glad that I was courteous to
them,

For are not they, likewise, children of
God?

FATHER HART. Colleen, they are the
children of the fiend,

And they have power until the end of
Time,

When God shall fight with them a great
pitched battle

And hack them into pieces.

MARY. He will smile,
Father, perhaps, and open His great
door.

FATHER HART. Did but the lawless
angels see that door,

They would fall, slain by everlasting
peace,

And when such angels knock upon our
doors,

Who goes with them must drive
through the same storm.

[A thin old arm comes round
the door-post and knocks and
beckons. It is clearly seen in
the silvery light. MARY BRUIN
goes to the door and stands
in it for a moment. MAUR-
TEEN BRUIN is busy filling
FATHER HART'S plate. BRIDGET
BRUIN stirs the fire.]

MARY. [coming to table.] There's
somebody out there that beck-
oned me

And raised her hand as though it held
a cup,

And she was drinking from it, so it
may be

That she is thirsty.

[She takes milk from the table
and carries it to the door.]

FATHER HART. That will be the child
That you would have it was no child
at all.

BRIDGET. And maybe, Father, what
he said was true;

For there is not another night in the
year

So wicked as to-night.

MAURTEEN. Nothing can harm us

While the good Father's underneath our roof.

MARY. A little queer old woman dressed in green.

BRIDGET. The good people beg for milk and fire,

Upon May Eve—woe to the house that gives,

For they have power upon it for a year.

MAURTEEN. Hush, woman, hush!

BRIDGET. She's given milk away. I knew she would bring evil on the house.

MAURTEEN. Who was it?

MARY. Both the tongue and face were strange.

MAURTEEN. Some strangers came last week to Clover Hill;

She must be one of them.

BRIDGET. I am afraid.

FATHER HART. The Cross will keep all evil from the house

While it hangs there.

MAURTEEN. Come, sit beside me, colleen,

And put away your dreams of discontent,

For I would have you light up my last days,

Like the good glow of the turf; and when I die

You'll be the wealthiest hereabout, for, colleen,

I have a stocking full of yellow guineas Hidden away where nobody can find it.

BRIDGET. You are the fool of every pretty face,

And I must spare and pinch that my son's wife

May have all kinds of ribbons for her head.

MAURTEEN. Do not be cross; she is a right good girl!

The butter is by your elbow, Father Hart.

My colleen, have not Fate and Time and Change

Done well for me and for old Bridget there?

We have a hundred acres of good land, And sit beside each other at the fire.

I have this reverend Father for my friend,

I look upon your face and my son's face—

We've put his plate by yours—and here he comes,

And brings with him the only thing we have lacked,

Abundance of good wine.

[SHAWN comes in.]

Stir up the fire,

And put new turf upon it till it blaze. To watch the turf-smoke coiling from

the fire,

And feel content and wisdom in your heart,

This is the best of life; when we are young

We long to tread a way none trod before,

But find the excellent old way through love,

And through the care of children, to the hour

For bidding Fate and Time and Change good-bye.

[MARY takes a sod of turf from the fire and goes out through the door. SHAWN follows her and meets her coming in.]

SHAWN. What is it draws you to the chill o' the wood?

There is a light among the stems of the trees

That makes one shiver.

MARY. A little queer old man Made me a sign to show he wanted fire To light his pipe.

BRIDGET. You've given milk and fire, Upon the unluckiest night of the year, and brought,

For all you know, evil upon the house. Before you married you were idle and fine,

And went about with ribbons on your head;

And now—no, Father, I will speak my mind,

She is not a fitting wife for any man—

SHAWN. Be quiet, Mother!

MAURTEEN. You are much too cross.

MARY. What do I care if I have given this house,

Where I must hear all day a bitter tongue,

Into the power of faeries!

BRIDGET. You know well
How calling the good people by that
name,
Or talking of them overmuch at all,
May bring all kinds of evil on the
house.

MARY. Come, faeries, take me out of
this dull house!
Let me have all the freedom I have lost;
Work when I will and idle when I will!
Faeries, come take me out of this dull
world,
For I would ride with you upon the
wind.

Run on the top of the dishevelled tide,
And dance upon the mountains like a
flame.

FATHER HART. You cannot know the
meaning of your words.

MARY. Father, I am right weary of
four tongues:
A tongue that is too crafty and too
wise,
A tongue that is too godly and too
grave,
A tongue that is more bitter than the
tide,
And a kind tongue too full of drowsy
love,
Of drowsy love and my captivity.

[SHAWN BRUIN *leads her to a
seat at the left of the door.*]

SHAWN. Do not blame me; I often
lie awake
Thinking that all things trouble your
bright head.
How beautiful it is—your broad pale
forehead
Under a cloudy blossoming of hair!
Sit down beside me here—these are too
old,
And have forgotten they were ever
young.

MARY. Oh, you are the great door-
post of this house,
And I the branch of blessed quicken
wood,
And if I could I'd hang upon the post,
Till I had brought good luck into the
house.

[*She would put her arms
about him, but looks shyly
at the PRIEST and lets her
arms fall.*]

FATHER HART. My daughter, take
his hand; by love alone
God binds us to Himself and to the
hearth,
That shuts us from the waste beyond
His peace

From maddening freedom and bewil-
dering light.

SHAWN. Would that the world were
mine to give it you,
And not its quiet hearths alone, but
even

All that bewilderment of light and
freedom,

If you would have it.

MARY. I would take the world
And break it into pieces in my hands
To see you smile watching it crumble
away.

SHAWN. Then I would mould a world
of fire and dew,
With no one bitter, grave, or over wise,
And nothing marred or old to do you
wrong,
And crowd the enraptured quiet of the
sky

With candles burning to your lonely
face.

MARY. Your looks are all the candles
that I need.

SHAWN. Once a fly dancing in a
beam of the sun,
Or the light wind blowing out of the
dawn,
Could fill your heart with dreams none
other knew,

But now the indissoluble sacrament
Has mixed your heart that was most
proud and cold

With my warm heart for ~~as for~~ the sun
and moon

Must fade and heaven be rolled up like
a scroll;

But your white spirit still walk by my
spirit.

[*A voice singing in the wood.*]

MAURTEEN. There's some one sing-
ing. Why, it's but a child.
It sang, "The lonely of heart is
withered away."

A strange song for a child, but she sings
sweetly,

Listen, listen! [*Goes to door.*]

MARY. Oh, cling close to me,

Because I have said wicked things to-night.

THE VOICE. The wind blows out of the gates of the day,
The wind blows over the lonely of heart,
And the lonely of heart is withered away.

While the faeries dance in a place apart,
Shaking their milk-white feet in a ring,

Tossing their milk-white arms in the air;

For they hear the wind laugh and murmur and sing

Of a land where even the old are fair,
And even the wise are merry of tongue;
But I heard a reed of Coolaney say,
"When the wind has laughed and murmured and sung

The lonely of heart is withered away!"

MAURTEEN. Being happy, I would have all others happy,

So I will bring her in out of the cold.
[*He brings in the faery child.*]

THE CHILD. I tire of winds and waters and pale lights.

MAURTEEN. And that's no wonder, for when night has fallen

The wood's a cold and a bewildering place;

But you are welcome here.

THE CHILD. I am welcome here. For when I tire of this warm little house,

There is one here that must away, away.

MAURTEEN. Oh, listen to her dreamy and strange talk.

Are you not cold?

THE CHILD. I will crouch down beside you,

For I have run a long, long way this night.

BRIDGET. You have a comely shape.

MAURTEEN. Your hair is wet.

BRIDGET. I'll warm your chilly feet.

MAURTEEN. You have come indeed A long, long way—for I have never seen

Your pretty face—and must be tired and hungry;

Here is some bread and wine.

THE CHILD. The wine is bitter. Old mother, have you no sweet food for me?

BRIDGET. I have some honey.

[*She goes into the next room.*]

MAURTEEN. You have coaxing ways, The mother was quite cross before you came.

[*BRIDGET returns with the honey and fills a porringer with milk.*]

BRIDGET. She is the child of gentle people; look

At her white hands and at her pretty dress.

I've brought you some new milk, but wait a while

And I will put it to the fire to warm.

For things well fitted for poor folk like us

Would never please a high-born child like you.

THE CHILD. From dawn, when you must blow the fire ablaze,

You work your fingers to the bone, old mother.

The young may lie in bed and dream and hope,

But you must work your fingers to the bone

Because your heart is old.

BRIDGET. The young are idle.

THE CHILD. Your memories have made you wise, old father;

The young must sigh through many a dream and hope.

But you are wise because your heart is old.

[*BRIDGET gives her more bread and honey.*]

MAURTEEN. Oh, who would think to find so young a girl

Loving old age and wisdom?

THE CHILD. No more, mother.

MAURTEEN. What a small bite! The milk is ready now.

[*Hands it to her.*]

What a small sip!

THE CHILD. Put on my shoes, old mother.

Now I would like to dance, now I have eaten.

The reeds are dancing by Coolaney lake,
And I would like to dance until the reeds
And the white waves have danced themselves asleep.

[BRIDGET puts on the shoes, and THE CHILD is about to dance, but suddenly sees the crucifix and shrieks and covers her eyes.]

What is that ugly thing on the black cross?

FATHER HART. You cannot know how naughty your words are!
That is our Blessed Lord.

THE CHILD. Hide it away.

BRIDGET. I have begun to be afraid again.

THE CHILD. Hide it away!

MAURTEEN. That would be wickedness!

BRIDGET. That would be sacrilege!

THE CHILD. The tortured thing! Hide it away.

MAURTEEN. Her parents are to blame.

FATHER HART. That is the image of the Son of God.

THE CHILD. [caressing him.] Hide it away, hide it away!

MAURTEEN. No, no.

FATHER HART. Because you are so young and like a bird,

That must take fright at every stir of the leaves,

I will go take it down.

THE CHILD. Hide it away!

And cover it out of sight and out of mind!

[FATHER HART takes crucifix from wall and carries it towards inner room.]

FATHER HART. Since you have come into the barony,

I will instruct you in our blessed faith; And being so keen-witted you'll soon learn.

[To the others.] We must be tender to all budding things;

Our Maker let no thought of Calvary Trouble the morning stars in their first song.

[Puts crucifix in inner room.]

THE CHILD. Here is level ground for dancing; I will dance.

[Sings.] "The wind blows out of the gates of the day,

The wind blows over the lonely of heart,

And the lonely of heart is withered away."

[She dances.]

MARY. [to SHAWN.] Just now when she came near I thought I heard Other small steps beating upon the floor,

And a faint music blowing in the wind, Invisible pipes giving her feet the tune.

SHAWN. I heard no steps but hers.

MARY. I hear them now. The unholy powers are dancing in the house.

MAURTEEN. Come over here, and if you promise me, Not to talk wickedly of holy things, I will give you something.

THE CHILD. Bring it me, old father.

MAURTEEN. Here are some ribbons that I bought in the town

For my son's wife—but she will let me give them

To tie up that wild hair the winds have tumbled.

THE CHILD. Come, tell me, do you love me?

MAURTEEN. Yes, I love you.

THE CHILD. Ah, but you love this fireside.

Do you love me?

FATHER HART. When the Almighty puts so great a share

Of His own ageless youth into a creature,

To look is but to love.

THE CHILD. But you love Him!

BRIDGET. She is blaspheming.

THE CHILD. And do you love me too?

MARY. I do not know.

THE CHILD. You love that young man there,

Yet could I make you ride upon the winds,

Run on the top of the dishevelled tide, And dance upon the mountains like a flame.

MARY. Queen of Angels and kind saints defend us!

Some dreadful thing will happen. A while ago
She took away the blessed quicken wood.

FATHER HART. You fear because of her unmeasured prattle;
She knows no better. Child, how old are you?

THE CHILD. When winter sleep is abroad my hair grows then,
My feet unsteady. When the leaves awaken

My mother carries me in her golden arms;

I'll soon put on my womanhood and marry

The spirits of wood and water, but who can tell

When I was born for the first time? I think

I am much older than the eagle cock
That blinks and blinks on Ballygawley Hill,

And he is the oldest thing under the moon.

FATHER HART. Oh, she is of the faery people.

THE CHILD. One called,
I sent my messengers for milk and fire,
She called again, and after that I came.

[*All except SHAWN and MARY BRUIN gather behind the PRIEST for protection.*]

SHAWN. [*rising.*] Though you have made all these obedient,

You have not charmed my sight, and won from me

A wish or gift to make you powerful;
I'll turn you from the house.

FATHER HART. No, I will face her.

THE CHILD. Because you took away the crucifix

I am so mighty that there's none can pass,

Unless I will it, where my feet have danced

Or where I've whirled my finger tips.

[*SHAWN tries to approach her and cannot.*]

MAURTEEN. Look, look!

There something stops him—look how he moves his hands

As though he rubbed them on a wall of glass.

FATHER HART. I will confront this mighty spirit alone;

Be not afraid, the Father is with us,
The Holy Martyrs and the Innocents,
The adoring Magi in their coats of mail,

And He who died and rose on the third day,

And all the nine angelic hierarchies.

[*THE CHILD kneels upon the settle beside MARY and puts her arms about her.*]

Cry, daughter, to the Angels and the Saints.

THE CHILD. You shall go with me, newly-married bride,

And gaze upon a merrier multitude.

White-armed Nuala, Aengus of the Birds,

Feacra of the hurtling foam, and him

Who is the ruler of the Western Host,

Finvarra and their Land of Heart's Desire,

Where beauty has no ebb, decay no flood,

But joy is wisdom, Time an endless song.

I kiss you and the world begins to fade.

SHAWN. Awake out of that trance—and cover up

Your eyes and ears.

FATHER HART. She must both look and listen,

For only the soul's choice can save her now.

Come over to me, daughter; stand beside me;

Think of this house and of your duties in it.

THE CHILD. Stay and come with me, newly-married bride,

For if you hear him you grow like the rest,

Bear children, cook, and bend above the churn,

And wrangle over butter, fowl, and eggs,

Until at last, grown old and bitter of tongue,

You're crouching there and shivering
at the grave.

FATHER HART. Daughter, I point
you out the way to Heaven.

THE CHILD. But I can lead you,
newly-married bride,
Where nobody gets old and crafty and
wise,

Where nobody gets old and godly and
grave,

Where nobody gets old and bitter of
tongue,

And where kind tongues bring no cap-
tivity;

For we are but obedient to the thoughts
That drift into the mind at a wink
of the eye.

FATHER HART. By the dear Name of
the One crucified,
I bid you, Mary Bruin, come to me!

THE CHILD. I keep you in the name
of your own heart.

FATHER HART. It is because I put
away the crucifix
That I am nothing, and my power is
nothing.

I'll bring it here again.

MAURTEEN. [*clinging to him.*] No.

BRIDGET. Do not leave us.

FATHER HART. O, let me go before
it is too late;

It is my sin alone that brought it all.
[*Singing outside.*]

THE CHILD. I hear them sing,
"Come, newly-married bride,
Come, to the woods and waters and
pale lights."

MARY. I will go with you.

FATHER HART. She is lost, alas!

THE CHILD. [*standing by the door.*]
But clinging mortal hope must fall
from you,

For we who ride the winds, run on the
waves,

And dance upon the mountains, are
more light

Than dew-drops on the banner of the
dawn.

MARY. O, take me with you!

SHAWN. Belovèd, I will keep you,
I've more than words, I have these
arms to hold you,
Nor all the faery host, do what they
please,

Shall ever make me loosen you from
these arms.

MARY. Dear face! Dear voice!

THE CHILD. Come, newly-married
bride.

MARY. I always loved her world—
and yet—and yet—

THE CHILD. White bird, white bird,
come with me, little bird.

MARY. She calls me!

THE CHILD. Come with me, little
bird.

[*Distant dancing figures
appear in the wood.*]

MARY. I can hear songs and dancing.

SHAWN. Stay with me!

MARY. I think that I would stay—
and yet—and yet—

THE CHILD. Come, little bird, with
crest of gold.

MARY. [*very softly.*] And yet—

THE CHILD. Come, little bird with
silver feet!

[*MARY BRUIN dies, and
THE CHILD goes.*]

SHAWN. She is dead!

BRIDGET. Come from that image;
body and soul are gone;

You have thrown your arms about a
drift of leaves,

Or bole of an ash tree changed into
her image.

FATHER HART. Thus do the spirits
of evil snatch their prey,

Almost out of the very hand of God;
And day by day their power is more
and more,

And men and women leave old paths,
for pride

Comes knocking with thin knuckles on
the heart.

[*Outside there are dancing
figures, and it may be a white
bird, and many voices singing.*]

"The wind blows out of the gates of the
day,

The wind blows over the lonely of
heart,

And the lonely of heart is withered
away;

While the faeries dance in a place
apart,

Shaking their milk-white feet in a
ring,

Tossing their milk-white arms in the
air;
For they hear the wind laugh and mur-
mur and sing
Of a land where even the old are fair,

And even the wise are merry of tongue;
But I heard a reed of Coolaney say—
'When the wind has laughed and mur-
mured and sung,
The lonely of heart is withered away.' "

RIDERS TO THE SEA *

JOHN MILLINGTON SYNGE

CHARACTERS

MAURYA, *an old woman.*
BARTLEY, *her son.*
CATHLEEN, *her daughter.*
NORA, *a younger daughter.*
MEN AND WOMEN.

SCENE—*An island off the west of Ireland. Cottage kitchen, with nets, oil-skins, spinning-wheel, some new boards standing by the wall, etc.* CATHLEEN, *a girl of about twenty, finishes kneading cake, and puts it down in the pot-oven by the fire; then wipes her hands, and begins to spin at the wheel.* NORA, *a young girl, puts her head in at the door.*

NORA. [*in a low voice.*] Where is she?

CATHLEEN. She's lying down, God help her, and may be sleeping, if she's able.

[*NORA comes in softly, and takes a bundle from under her shawl.*]

CATHLEEN. [*spinning the wheel rapidly.*] What is it you have?

NORA. The young priest is, after bringing them. It's a shirt and a plain stocking were got off a drowned man in Donegal.

[*CATHLEEN stops her wheel with a sudden movement, and leans out to listen.*]

NORA. We're to find out if it's Michael's they are, some time herself will be down looking by the sea.

CATHLEEN. How would they be Michael's, Nora? How would he go the length of that way to the far north?

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NORA. The young priest says he's known the like of it. "If it's Michael's they are," says he, "you can tell herself he's got a clean burial by the grace of God, and if they're not his, let no one say a word about them, for she'll be getting her death," says he, "with crying and lamenting."

[*The door which NORA half closed is blown open by a gust of wind.*]

CATHLEEN. [*looking out anxiously.*] Did you ask him would he stop Bartley going this day with the horses to the Galway fair?

NORA. "I won't stop him," says he, "but let you not be afraid. Herself does be saying prayers half through the night, and the Almighty God won't leave her destitute," says he, "with no son living."

CATHLEEN. Is the sea bad by the white rocks, Nora?

NORA. Middling bad, God help us. There's a great roaring in the west, and it's worse it'll be getting when the tide's turned to the wind. [*she goes over to the table with the bundle.*] Shall I open it now?

CATHLEEN. Maybe she'd wake up on us, and come in before we'd done. [*coming to the table.*] It's a long time we'll be, and the two of us crying.

NORA. [*goes to the inner door and listens.*] She's moving about on the bed. She'll be coming in a minute.

CATHLEEN. Give me the ladder, and I'll put them up in the turf-loft, the way she won't know of them at all, and maybe when the tide turns she'll be going down to see would he be floating from the east.

[*They put the ladder against the gable of the chimney;*

CATHLEEN *goes up a few steps and hides the bundle in the turf-loft.* MAURYA *comes from the inner room.*

MAURYA. [*looking up at CATHLEEN and speaking querulously.*] Isn't it turf enough you have for this day and evening?

CATHLEEN. There's a cake baking at the fire for a short space [*throwing down the turf*] and Bartley will want it when the tide turns if he goes to Connemara.

[*NORA picks up the turf and puts it round the pot-oven.*]

MAURYA. [*sitting down on a stool at the fire.*] He won't go this day with the wind rising from the south and west. He won't go this day, for the young priest will stop him surely.

NORA. He'll not stop him, mother, and I heard Eamon Simon and Stephen Pheety and Colum Shawn saying he would go.

MAURYA. Where is he itself?

NORA. He went down to see would there be another boat sailing in the week, and I'm thinking it won't be long till he's here now, for the tide's turning at the green head, and the hooker's tacking from the east.

CATHLEEN. I hear some one passing the big stones.

NORA. [*looking out.*] He's coming now, and he in a hurry.

BARTLEY. [*comes in and looks round the room; speaking sadly and quietly.*] Where is the bit of new rope, Cathleen, which was bought in Connemara?

CATHLEEN. [*coming down.*] Give it to him, Nora; it's on a nail by the white boards. I hung it up this morning, for the pig with the black feet was eating it.

NORA. [*giving him a rope.*] Is that it, Bartley?

MAURYA. You'd do right to leave that rope, Bartley, hanging by the boards. [*BARTLEY takes the rope.*] It will be wanting in this place, I'm telling you, if Michael is washed up to-morrow morning, or the next morning, or any morning in the week, for it's a

deep grave we'll make him by the grace of God.

BARTLEY. [*beginning to work with the rope.*] I've no halter the way I can ride down on the mare, and I must go now quickly. This is the one boat going for two weeks or beyond it, and the fair will be a good fair for horses I heard them saying below.

MAURYA. It's a hard thing they'll be saying below if the body is washed up and there's no man in it to make the coffin, and I after giving a big price for the finest white boards you'd find in Connemara.

[*She looks round at the boards.*]

BARTLEY. How would it be washed up, and we after looking each day for nine days, and a strong wind blowing a while back from the west and south?

MAURYA. If it wasn't found itself, that wind is raising the sea, and there was a star up against the moon, and it rising in the night. If it was a hundred horses, or a thousand horses you had itself, what is the price of a thousand horses against a son where there is one son only?

BARTLEY. [*working at the halter, to CATHLEEN.*] Let you go down each day, and see the sheep aren't jumping in on the rye, and if the jobber comes you can sell the pig with the black feet if there is a good price going.

MAURYA. How would the like of her get a good price for a pig?

BARTLEY. [*to CATHLEEN.*] If the west wind holds with the last bit of the moon let you and Nora get up weed enough for another cock for the kelp. It's hard set we'll be from this day with no one in it but one man to work.

MAURYA. It's hard set we'll be surely the day you're drown'd with the rest. What way will I live and the girls with me, and I an old woman looking for the grave?

[*BARTLEY lays down the halter, takes off his old coat, and puts on a newer one of the same flannel.*]

BARTLEY. [*to NORA.*] Is she coming to the pier?

NORA. [*looking out.*] She's passing

the green head and letting fall her sails.

BARTLEY. [*getting his purse and tobacco.*] I'll have half an hour to go down, and you'll see me coming again in two days, or in three days, or maybe in four days if the wind is bad.

MAURYA. [*turning round to the fire, and putting her shawl over her head.*] Isn't it a hard and cruel man won't hear a word from an old woman, and she holding him from the sea?

CATHLEEN. It's the life of a young man to be going on the sea, and who would listen to an old woman with one thing and she saying it over?

BARTLEY. [*taking the halter.*] I must go now quickly. I'll ride down on the red mare, and the gray pony'll run behind me. . . . The blessing of God on you. [*He goes out.*]

MAURYA. [*crying out as he is in the door.*] He's gone now, God spare us, and we'll not see him again. He's gone now, and when the black night is falling I'll have no son left me in the world.

CATHLEEN. Why wouldn't you give him your blessing and he looking round in the door? Isn't it sorrow enough is on every one in this house without your sending him out with an unlucky word behind him, and a hard word in his ear?

[MAURYA takes up the tongs and begins raking the fire aimlessly without looking round.]

NORA. [*turning toward her.*] You're taking away the turf from the cake.

CATHLEEN. [*crying out.*] The Son of God forgive us, Nora, we're after forgetting his bit of bread.

[*She comes over to the fire.*]

NORA. And it's destroyed he'll be going till dark night, and he after eating nothing since the sun went up.

CATHLEEN. [*turning the cake out of the oven.*] It's destroyed he'll be, surely. There's no sense left on any person in a house where an old woman will be talking forever.

[MAURYA sways herself on her stool.]

CATHLEEN. [*cutting off some of the*

bread and rolling it in a cloth; to MAURYA.] Let you go down now to the spring well and give him this and he passing. You'll see him then and the dark word will be broken, and you can say "God speed you," the way he'll be easy in his mind.

MAURYA. [*taking the bread.*] Will I be in it as soon as himself?

CATHLEEN. If you go now quickly.

MAURYA. [*standing up unsteadily.*] It's hard set I am to walk.

CATHLEEN. [*looking at her anxiously.*] Give her the stick, Nora, or maybe she'll slip on the big stones.

NORA. What stick?

CATHLEEN. The stick Michael brought from Connemara.

MAURYA. [*taking a stick NORA gives her.*] In the big world the old people do be leaving things after them for their sons and children, but in this place it is the young men do be leaving things behind for them that do be old.

[*She goes out slowly. NORA goes over to the ladder.*]

CATHLEEN. Wait, Nora, maybe she'd turn back quickly. She's that sorry, God help her, you wouldn't know the thing she'd do.

NORA. Is she gone round by the bush?

CATHLEEN. [*looking out.*] She's gone now! Throw it down quickly, for the Lord knows when she'll be out of it again.

NORA. [*getting the bundle from the loft.*] The young priest said he'd be passing to-morrow, and we might go down and speak to him below if it's Michael's they are surely.

CATHLEEN. [*taking the bundle.*] Did he say what way they were found?

NORA. [*coming down.*] "There were two men," says he, "and they rowing round with poteen before the cocks crowed, and the oar of one of them caught the body, and they passing the black cliffs of the north."

CATHLEEN. [*trying to open the bundle.*] Give me a knife, Nora, the string's perished with the salt water, and there's a black knot on it you wouldn't loosen in a week.

NORA. [*giving her a knife.*] I've heard tell it was a long way to Donegal.

CATHLEEN. [*cutting the string.*] It is surely. There was a man in here a while ago—the man sold us that knife—and he said if you set off walking from the rocks beyond, it would be seven days you'd be in Donegal.

NORA. And what time would a man take, and he floating?

[*CATHLEEN opens the bundle and takes out a bit of a stocking. They look at them eagerly.*]

CATHLEEN. [*in a low voice.*] The Lord spare us, Nora! isn't it a queer hard thing to say if it's his they are surely?

NORA. I'll get his shirt off the hook the way we can put the one flannel on the other. [*she looks through some clothes hanging in the corner.*] It's not with them, Cathleen, and where will it be?

CATHLEEN. I'm thinking Bartley put it on him in the morning, for his own shirt was heavy with the salt in it. [*pointing to the corner.*] There's a bit of a sleeve was of the same stuff. Give me that and it will do.

[*NORA brings it to her and they compare the flannel.*]

CATHLEEN. It's the same stuff, Nora; but if it is itself aren't there great rolls of it in the shops of Galway, and isn't it many another man may have a shirt of it as well as Michael himself?

NORA. [*who has taken up the stocking and counted the stitches, crying out.*] It's Michael, Cathleen, it's Michael; God spare his soul, and what will herself say when she hears this story, and Bartley on the sea?

CATHLEEN. [*taking the stocking.*] It's a plain stocking.

NORA. It's the second one of the third pair I knitted, and I put up three-score stitches, and I dropped four of them.

CATHLEEN. [*counts the stitches.*] It's that number is in it. [*crying out.*] Ah, Nora, isn't it a bitter thing to think of him floating that way to the far north,

and no one to keen him but the black hags that do be flying on the sea?

NORA. [*swinging herself round, and throwing out her arms on the clothes.*] And isn't it a pitiful thing when there is nothing left of a man who was a great rower and fisher, but a bit of an old shirt and a plain stocking?

CATHLEEN. [*after an instant.*] Tell me is herself coming, Nora? I hear a little sound on the path.

NORA. [*looking out.*] She is, Cathleen. She's coming up to the door.

CATHLEEN. Put these things away before she'll come in. Maybe it's easier she'll be after giving her blessing to Bartley, and we won't let on we've heard anything the time he's on the sea.

NORA. [*helping CATHLEEN to close the bundle.*] We'll put them here in the corner.

[*They put them into a hole in the chimney corner. CATHLEEN goes back to the spinning-wheel.*]

NORA. Will she see it was crying I was?

CATHLEEN. Keep your back to the door the way the light'll not be on you.

[*NORA sits down at the chimney corner, with her back to the door. MAURYA comes in very slowly, without looking at the girls, and goes over to her stool at the other side of the fire. The cloth with the bread is still in her hand. The girls look at each other, and NORA points to the bundle of bread.*]

CATHLEEN. [*after spinning for a moment.*] You didn't give him his bit of bread?

[*MAURYA begins to keen softly, without turning round.*]

CATHLEEN. Did you see him riding down? [*MAURYA goes on keening.*]

CATHLEEN. [*a little impatiently.*] God forgive you; isn't it a better thing to raise your voice and tell what you seen, than to be making lamentation for a thing that's done? Did you see Bartley, I'm saying to you.

MAURYA. [*with a weak voice.*] My heart's broken from this day.

CATHLEEN. [*as before.*] Did you see Bartley?

MAURYA. I seen the fearfulest thing.

CATHLEEN. [*leaves her wheel and looks out.*] God forgive you; he's riding the mare now over the green head, and the gray pony behind him.

MAURYA. [*starts, so that her shawl falls back from her head and shows her white tossed hair; with a frightened voice.*] The gray pony behind him.

CATHLEEN. [*coming to the fire.*] What is it ails you, at all?

MAURYA. [*speaking very slowly.*] I've seen the fearfulest thing any person has seen, since the day Bride Dara seen the dead man with a child in his arms.

CATHLEEN AND NORA. Uah.

[*They crouch down in front of the old woman at the fire.*]

NORA. Tell us what it is you seen.

MAURYA. I went down to the spring well, and I stood there saying a prayer to myself. Then Bartley came along, and he riding on the red mare with the gray pony behind him. [*she puts up her hands, as if to hide something from her eyes.*] The Son of God spare us, Nora!

CATHLEEN. What is it you seen.

MAURYA. I seen Michael himself.

CATHLEEN. [*speaking softly.*] You did not, mother; it wasn't Michael you seen, for his body is after being found in the Far North, and he's got a clean burial by the grace of God.

MAURYA. [*a little defiantly.*] I'm after seeing him this day, and he riding and galloping. Bartley came first on the red mare; and I tried to say, "God speed you," but something choked the words in my throat. He went by quickly; and "the blessing of God on you," says he, and I could say nothing. I looked up then, and I crying, at the gray pony, and there was Michael upon it—with fine clothes on him, and new shoes on his feet.

CATHLEEN. [*begins to keen.*] It's destroyed we are from this day. It's destroyed, surely.

NORA. Didn't the young priest say the Almighty God wouldn't leave her destitute with no son living?

MAURYA. [*in a low voice, but clearly.*] It's little the like of him knows of the sea. . . . Bartley will be lost now, and let you call in Eamon and make me a good coffin out of the white boards, for I won't live after them. I've had a husband, and a husband's father, and six sons in this house—six fine men, though it was a hard birth I had with every one of them and they coming to the world—and some of them were found and some of them were not found, but they're gone now the lot of them. . . . There were Stephen, and Shawn, were lost in the great wind, and found after in the Bay of Gregory of the Golden Mouth, and carried up the two of them on the one plank, and in by that door.

[*She pauses for a moment; the girls start as if they heard something through the door that is half open behind them.*]

NORA. [*in a whisper.*] Did you hear that, Cathleen? Did you hear a noise in the northeast?

CATHLEEN. [*in a whisper.*] There's some one after crying out by the sea-shore.

MAURYA. [*continues without hearing anything.*] There was Sheamus and his father, and his own father again, were lost in a dark night, and not a stick or sign was seen of them when the sun went up. There was Patch after was drowned out of a curagh that turned over. I was sitting here with Bartley, and he a baby, lying on my two knees, and I seen two women, and three women, and four women coming in, and they crossing themselves, and not saying a word. I looked out then, and there were men coming after them, and they holding a thing in the half of a red sail, and water dripping out of it—it was a dry day, Nora—and leaving a track to the door.

[*She pauses again with her hand stretched out toward the door. It opens softly and old women begin to come in, cross-*

ing themselves on the threshold, and kneeling down in front of the stage with red petticoats over their heads.]

MAURYA. [*half in a dream, to CATHLEEN.*] Is it Patch, or Michael, or what is it at all?

CATHLEEN. Michael is after being found in the Far North, and when he is found there how could he be here in this place?

MAURYA. There does be a power of young men floating round in the sea, and what way would they know if it was Michael they had, or another man like him, for when a man is nine days in the sea, and the wind blowing, it's hard set his own mother would be to say what man was it.

CATHLEEN. It's Michael, God spare him, for they're after sending us a bit of his clothes from the Far North.

[She reaches out and hands MAURYA the clothes that belonged to MICHAEL. MAURYA stands up slowly, and takes them in her hands. NORA looks out.]

NORA. They're carrying a thing among them and there's water dripping out of it and leaving a track by the big stones.

CATHLEEN. [*in a whisper to the women who have come in.*] Is it Bartley it is?

ONE OF THE WOMEN. It is surely, God rest his soul.

[Two younger women come in and pull out the table. Then men carry in the body of BARTLEY, laid on a plank, with a bit of a sail over it, and lay it on the table.]

CATHLEEN. [*to the women, as they are doing so.*] What way was he drowned?

ONE OF THE WOMEN. The gray pony knocked him into the sea, and he was washed out where there is a great surf on the white rocks.

[MAURYA has gone over and knelt down at the head of the table. The women are keening softly and swaying them-

selves with a slow movement. CATHLEEN and NORA kneel at the other end of the table. The men kneel near the door.]

MAURYA. [*raising her head and speaking as if she did not see the people around her.*] They're all gone now, and there isn't anything more the sea can do to me. . . . I'll have no call now to be up crying and praying when the wind breaks from the south, and you can hear the surf is in the east, and the surf is in the west, making a great stir with the two noises, and they hitting one on the other. I'll have no call now to be going down and getting Holy Water in the dark nights after Samhain, and I won't care what way the sea is when the other women will be keening. [*to NORA.*] Give me the Holy Water, Nora; there's a small sup still on the dresser.

[NORA gives it to her.]

MAURYA. [*drops MICHAEL'S clothes across BARTLEY'S feet, and sprinkles the Holy Water over him.*] It isn't that I haven't prayed for you, Bartley, to the Almighty God. It isn't that I haven't said prayers in the dark night till you wouldn't know what I'd be saying; but it's a great rest I'll have now, and it's time surely. It's a great rest I'll have now, and great sleeping in the long nights after Samhain, if it's only a bit of wet flour we do have to eat, and maybe a fish that would be stinking.

[She kneels down again, crossing herself, and saying prayers under her breath.]

CATHLEEN. [*to an old man.*] Maybe yourself and Eamon would make a coffin when the sun rises. We have fine white boards herself bought, God help her, thinking Michael would be found, and I have a new cake you can eat while you'll be working.

THE OLD MAN. [*looking at the boards.*] Are there nails with them?

CATHLEEN. There are not, Colum; we didn't think of the nails.

ANOTHER MAN. It's a great wonder she wouldn't think of the nails, and all the coffins she's seen made already.

CATHLEEN. It's getting old she is, and broken.

[MAURYA stands up again very slowly and spreads out the pieces of MICHAEL'S clothes beside the body, sprinkling them with the last of the Holy Water.]

NORA. [in a whisper to CATHLEEN.] She's quiet now and easy; but the day Michael was drowned you could hear her crying out from this to the spring well. It's fonder she was of Michael, and would any one have thought that?

CATHLEEN. [slowly and clearly.] An old woman will be soon tired with anything she will do, and isn't it nine days herself is after crying and keening, and making great sorrow in the house?

MAURYA. [puts the empty cup, mouth downwards, on the table, and lays her hands together on BARTLEY'S feet.]

They're all together this time, and the end is come. May the Almighty God have mercy on Bartley's soul, and on Michael's soul, and on the souls of Sheamus and Patch, and Stephen and Shawn; [bending her head] and may He have mercy on my soul, Nora, and on the soul of every one is left living in the world.

[She pauses, and the keen rises a little more loudly from the women, then sinks away.]

MAURYA. [continuing.] Michael has a clean burial in the Far North, by the grace of the Almighty God. Bartley will have a fine coffin out of the white boards, and a deep grave surely. What more can we want than that? No man at all can be living forever, and we must be satisfied.

[She kneels down again and the curtain falls slowly.]

A NIGHT AT AN INN*

LORD DUNSANY

CHARACTERS

A. E. SCOTT-FORTESCUE (THE TOFF), a
dilapidated gentleman.
WILLIAM JONES (BILL) }
ALBERT THOMAS } merchant sailors.
JACOB SMITH(SNIGGERS) }
FIRST PRIEST OF KLESH.
SECOND PRIEST OF KLESH.
THIRD PRIEST OF KLESH.
KLESH.

The curtain rises on a room in an inn. SNIGGERS and BILL are talking, THE TOFF is reading a paper. ALBERT sits a little apart.

SNIGGERS. What's his idea, I wonder?

BILL. I don't know.

SNIGGERS. And how much longer will he keep us here?

BILL. We've been here three days.

SNIGGERS. And 'aven't seen a soul.

BILL. And a pretty penny it cost us when he rented the pub.

SNIGGERS. 'Ow long did 'e rent the pub for?

BILL. You never know with him.

SNIGGERS. It's lonely enough.

BILL. 'Ow long did you rent the pub for, Toffy?

[THE TOFF continues to read a sporting paper; he takes no notice of what is said.]

SNIGGERS. 'E's such a toff.

BILL. Yet 'e's clever, no mistake.

SNIGGERS. Those clever ones are the beggars to make a muddle. Their plans are clever enough, but they don't work, and then they make a mess of things much worse than you or me.

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BILL. Ah!

SNIGGERS. I don't like this place.

BILL. Why not?

SNIGGERS. I don't like the looks of it.

BILL. He's keeping us here because here those niggers can't find us. The three heathen priests what was looking for us so. But we want to go, and sell our ruby soon.

ALBERT. There's no sense in it.

BILL. Why not, Albert?

ALBERT. Because I gave those black devils the slip in Hull.

BILL. You give 'em the slip, Albert?

ALBERT. The slip, all three of them. The fellows with the gold spots on their foreheads. I had the ruby then and I give them the slip in Hull.

BILL. How did you do it, Albert?

ALBERT. I had the ruby and they were following me. . . .

BILL. Who told them you had the ruby? You didn't show it.

ALBERT. No. . . . But they kind of know.

SNIGGERS. They kind of know, Albert?

ALBERT. Yes, they know if you've got it. Well, they sort of mouched after me, and I tells a policeman and he says, Oh, they were only three poor niggers and they wouldn't hurt me. Ugh! When I thought of what they did in Malta to poor old Jim.

BILL. Yes, and to George in Bombay before we started.

SNIGGERS. Ugh!

BILL. Why didn't you give 'em in charge?

ALBERT. What about the ruby, Bill?

BILL. Ah!

ALBERT. Well, I did better than that. I walks up and down through Hull. I walks slow enough. And then I turns a

corner and I runs. I never sees a corner but I turns it. But sometimes I let a corner pass just to fool them. I twists about like a hare. Then I sits down and waits. No priests.

SNIGGERS. What?

BILL. Well done, Albert!

SNIGGERS. [*after a sigh of content.*] Why didn't you tell us?

ALBERT. 'Cause 'e won't let you speak. 'E's got 'is plans and 'e thinks we're silly folk. Things must be done 'is way. And all the time I've give 'em the slip. Might 'ave 'ad one o' them crooked knives in him before now but for me who give 'em the slip in Hull.

BILL. Well done, Albert! Do you hear that, Toffy? Albert has give 'em the slip.

THE TOFF. Yes, I hear.

SNIGGERS. Well, what do you say to that?

THE TOFF. O . . . Well done, Albert!

ALBERT. And what a' you going to do?

THE TOFF. Going to wait.

ALBERT. Don't seem to know what 'e's waiting for.

SNIGGERS. It's a nasty place.

ALBERT. It's getting silly, Bill. Our money's gone and we want to sell the ruby. Let's get on to a town.

BILL. But 'e won't come.

ALBERT. Then we'll leave him.

SNIGGERS. We'll be all right if we keep away from Hull.

ALBERT. We'll go to London.

BILL. But 'e must 'ave 'is share.

SNIGGERS. All right. Only let's go. [TO THE TOFF.] We're going, do you hear? Give us the ruby.

THE TOFF. Certainly.

[*He gives them a ruby from his waistcoat pocket; it is the size of a small hen's egg. He goes on reading his paper.*]

ALBERT. Come on, Sniggers.

[*Exeunt ALBERT and SNIGGERS.*]

BILL. Good-by, old man. We'll give you your fair share, but there's nothing to do here—no girls, no halls, and we must sell the ruby.

THE TOFF. I'm not a fool, Bill.

BILL. No, no, of course not. Of course you ain't, and you've helped us a lot. Good-by. You'll say good-by?

THE TOFF. Oh, yes, good-by.

[*Still reads his paper. Exit BILL.*]

THE TOFF. *puts his revolver on the table beside him and goes on with his papers. After a moment the three men come rushing in again, frightened.*

SNIGGERS. [*out of breath.*] We've come back, Toffy.

THE TOFF. So you have.

ALBERT. Toffy. . . . How did they get here?

THE TOFF. They walked, of course.

ALBERT. But it's eighty miles.

SNIGGERS. Did you know they were here, Toffy?

THE TOFF. Expected them about now.

ALBERT. Eighty miles!

BILL. Toffy, old man . . . what are we to do?

THE TOFF. Ask Albert.

BILL. If they can do things like this, there's no one can save us but you, Toffy. . . . I always knew you were a clever one. We won't be fools any more. We'll obey you, Toffy.

THE TOFF. You're brave enough and strong enough. There isn't many that would steal a ruby eye out of an idol's head, and such an idol as that was to look at, and on such a night. You're brave enough, Bill. But you're all three of you fools. Jim would have none of my plans, and where's Jim? And George. What did they do to him?

SNIGGERS. Don't, Toffy!

THE TOFF. Well, then, your strength is no use to you. You want cleverness; or they'll have you the way they had George and Jim.

ALL. Ugh!

THE TOFF. Those black priests would follow you round the world in circles. Year after year, till they got the idol's eye. And if we died with it, they'd follow our grandchildren. That fool thinks he can escape from men

like that by running round three streets in the town of Hull.

ALBERT. God's truth, *you* 'aven't escaped them, because they're 'ere.

THE TOFF. So I supposed.

ALBERT. *You supposed.*

THE TOFF. Yes, I believe there's no announcement in the Society papers. But I took this country seat especially to receive them. There's plenty of room if you dig, it is pleasantly situated, and, what is more important, it is in a very quiet neighborhood. So I am at home to them this afternoon.

BILL. Well, *you're* a deep one.

THE TOFF. And remember, you've only my wits between you and death, and don't put your futile plans against those of an educated gentleman.

ALBERT. If you're a gentleman, why don't you go about among gentlemen instead of the likes of us?

THE TOFF. Because I was too clever for them as I am too clever for you.

ALBERT. Too clever for them?

THE TOFF. I never lost a game of cards in my life.

BILL. You never lost a game?

THE TOFF. Not when there was money in it.

BILL. Well, well!

THE TOFF. Have a game of poker?

ALL. No, thanks.

THE TOFF. Then do as you're told.

BILL. All right, Toffy.

SNIGGERS. I saw something just then. Hadn't we better draw the curtains?

THE TOFF. No.

SNIGGERS. What?

THE TOFF. Don't draw the curtains.

SNIGGERS. Oh, all right.

BILL. But, Toffy, they can see us. One doesn't let the enemy do that. I don't see why. . . .

THE TOFF. No, of course you don't.

BILL. Oh, all right, Toffy.

[*All begin to pull out revolvers.*]

THE TOFF. [*putting his own away.*]
No revolvers, please.

ALBERT. Why not?

THE TOFF. Because I don't want any

noise at my party. We might get guests that hadn't been invited. *Knives* are a different matter.

[*All draw knives. THE TOFF signs to them not to draw them yet. TOFFY has already taken back his ruby.*]

BILL. I think they're coming, Toffy.

THE TOFF. Not yet.

ALBERT. When will they come?

THE TOFF. When I am quite ready to receive them. Not before.

SNIGGERS. I should like to get this over.

THE TOFF. Should you? Then we'll have them now.

SNIGGERS. Now?

THE TOFF. Yes. Listen to me. You shall do as you see me do. You will all pretend to go out. I'll show you how. I've got the ruby. When they see me alone they will come for their idol's eye.

BILL. How can they tell like this which of us has it?

THE TOFF. I confess I don't know, but they seem to.

SNIGGERS. What will you do when they come in?

THE TOFF. I shall do nothing.

SNIGGERS. What?

THE TOFF. They will creep up behind me. Then, my friends, Sniggers and Bill and Albert, who gave them the slip, will do what they can.

BILL. All right, Toffy. Trust us.

THE TOFF. If you're a little slow, you will see enacted the cheerful spectacle that accompanied the demise of Jim.

SNIGGERS. Don't, Toffy. We'll be there, all right.

THE TOFF. Very well. Now watch me.

[*He goes past the windows to the inner door R. He opens it inwards, then under cover of the open door, he slips down on his knee and closes it, remaining on the inside, appearing to have gone out. He signs to the others, who understand. Then he appears to re-enter in the same manner.*]

THE TOFF. Now, I shall sit with my back to the door. You go out one by one, so far as our friends can make out. Crouch very low to be on the safe side. They mustn't see you through the window.

[BILL makes his sham exit.]

THE TOFF. Remember, no revolvers. The police are, I believe, proverbially inquisitive.

[The other two follow BILL. All three are now crouching inside the door R. THE TOFF puts the ruby beside him on the table. He lights a cigarette. The door at the back opens so slowly that you can hardly say at what moment it began. THE TOFF picks up his paper. A native of India wriggles along the floor ever so slowly, seeking cover from chairs. He moves L. where THE TOFF is. The three sailors are R. SNIGGERS and ALBERT lean forward. BILL's arm keeps them back. An arm-chair had better conceal them from the Indian. The black PRIEST nears THE TOFF. BILL watches to see if any more are coming. Then he leaps forward alone—he has taken his boots off—and knifes the PRIEST. The PRIEST tries to shout but BILL's left hand is over his mouth. THE TOFF continues to read his sporting paper. He never looks around.]

BILL. [sotto voce.] There's only one, Toffy. What shall we do?

THE TOFF. [without turning his head.] Only one?

BILL. Yes.

THE TOFF. Wait a moment. Let me think. [still apparently absorbed in his paper.] Ah, yes. You go back, Bill. We must attract another guest. . . . Now, are you ready?

BILL. Yes.

THE TOFF. All right. You shall now see my demise at my Yorkshire residence. You must receive guests for

me. [he leaps up in full view of the window, flings up both arms and falls to the floor near the dead PRIEST.] Now, be ready.

[His eyes close. There is a long pause. Again the door opens, very, very slowly. Another PRIEST creeps in. He has three golden spots upon his forehead. He looks round, then he creeps up to his companion and turns him over and looks inside of his clenched hands. Then he looks at the recumbent TOFF. Then he creeps toward him. BILL slips after him and knifes him like the other with his left hand over his mouth.]

BILL. [sotto voce.] We've only got two, Toffy.

THE TOFF. Still another.

BILL. What'll we do?

THE TOFF. [sitting up.] Hum.

BILL. This is the best way, much.

THE TOFF. Out of the question. Never play the same game twice.

BILL. Why not, Toffy?

THE TOFF. Doesn't work if you do.

BILL. Well?

THE TOFF. I have it, Albert. You will now walk into the room. I showed you how to do it.

ALBERT. Yes.

THE TOFF. Just run over here and have a fight at this window with these two men.

ALBERT. But they're. . . .

THE TOFF. Yes, they're dead, my perspicuous Albert. But Bill and I are going to resuscitate them. . . . Come on.

[BILL picks up a body under the arms.]

THE TOFF. That's right, Bill. [does the same.] Come and help us, Sniggers. [SNIGGERS comes.] Keep low, keep low. Wave their arms about, Sniggers. Don't show yourself. Now, Albert, over you go. Our Albert is slain. Back you get, Bill. Back, Sniggers. Still, Albert. Mustn't move when he comes. Not a muscle.

[A face appears at the window and stays for some time. Then the door opens and, looking craftily round, the third PRIEST enters. He looks at his companions' bodies and turns round. He suspects something. He takes up one of the knives and with a knife in each hand he puts his back to the wall. He looks to the left and right.]

THE TOFF. Come on, Bill.

[The PRIEST rushes to the door. THE TOFF knifes the last PRIEST from behind.]

BILL. Well done, Toffy. Oh, you are a deep one!

ALBERT. A deep one if ever there was one.

SNIGGERS. There ain't any more, Bill, are there?

THE TOFF. No more in the world, my friend.

BILL. Aye, that's all there are. There were only three in the temple. Three priests and their beastly idol.

ALBERT. What is it worth, Toffy? Is it worth a thousand pounds?

THE TOFF. It's worth all they've got in the shop. Worth just whatever we like to ask for it.

ALBERT. Then we're millionaires now.

THE TOFF. Yes, and, what is more important, we no longer have any heirs.

BILL. We'll have to sell it now.

ALBERT. That won't be easy. It's a pity it isn't small and we had half a dozen. Hadn't the idol any other on him?

BILL. No, he was green jade all over and only had this one eye. He had it in the middle of his forehead and was a long sight uglier than anything else in the world.

SNIGGERS. I'm sure we ought all to be very grateful to Toffy.

BILL. And, indeed, we ought.

ALBERT. If it hadn't been for him.

BILL. Yes, if it hadn't been for old Toffy. . . .

SNIGGERS. He's a deep one.

THE TOFF. Well, you see I just have a knack of foreseeing things.

SNIGGERS. I should think you did.

BILL. Why, I don't suppose anything happens that our Toff doesn't foresee. Does it, Toffy?

THE TOFF. Well, I don't think it does, Bill. I don't think it often does.

BILL. Life is no more than just a game of cards to our old Toff.

THE TOFF. Well, we've taken these fellows' trick.

SNIGGERS. [going to window.] It wouldn't do for anyone to see them.

THE TOFF. Oh, nobody will come this way. We're all alone on a moor.

BILL. Where will we put them?

THE TOFF. Bury them in the cellar, but there's no hurry.

BILL. And what then, Toffy?

THE TOFF. Why, then we'll go to London and upset the ruby business. We have really come through this job very nicely.

BILL. I think the first thing that we ought to do is to give a little supper to old Toffy. We'll bury these fellows to-night.

ALBERT. Yes, let's.

SNIGGERS. The very thing!

BILL. And we'll all drink his health.

ALBERT. Good old Toffy!

SNIGGERS. He ought to have been a general or a premier.

[They get bottles from cupboard, etc.]

THE TOFF. Well, we've earned our bit of a supper. . . . [They sit down.]

BILL. [glass in hand.] Here's to old Toffy, who guessed everything!

ALBERT AND SNIGGERS. Good old Toffy!

BILL. Toffy, who saved our lives and made our fortunes.

ALBERT AND SNIGGERS. Hear! Hear!

THE TOFF. And here's to Bill, who saved me twice to-night.

SNIGGERS. Hear, hear! Hear! Hear!

ALBERT. He foresees everything.

BILL. A speech, Toffy. A speech from our general.

ALL. Yes, a speech.

SNIGGERS. A speech.

THE TOFF. Well, get me some water. This whisky's too much for my head, and I must keep it clear till our friends are safe in the cellar.

BILL. Water? Yes, of course. Get him some water, Sniggers.

SNIGGERS. We don't use water here. Where shall I get it?

BILL. Outside in the garden.

[Exit SNIGGERS.]

ALBERT. Here's to the future!

BILL. Here's to Albert Thomas, Esquire.

ALBERT. And William Jones, Esquire.

[Re-enter SNIGGERS, terrified.]

THE TOFF. Hullo, here's Jacob Smith, Esquire, J.P., alias Sniggers, back again.

SNIGGERS. Toffy, I've been thinking about my share in that ruby. I don't want it, Toffy; I don't want it.

THE TOFF. Nonsense, Sniggers. Nonsense.

SNIGGERS. You shall have it, Toffy, you shall have it yourself, only say Sniggers has no share in this 'ere ruby. Say it, Toffy, say it!

BILL. Want to turn informer, Sniggers?

SNIGGERS. No, no. Only I don't want the ruby, Toffy! . . .

THE TOFF. No more nonsense, Sniggers. We're all in together in this. If one hangs, we all hang; but they won't outwit me. Besides, it's not a hanging affair, they had their knives.

SNIGGERS. Toffy, Toffy, I always treated you fair, Toffy. I was always one to say, "Give Toffy a chance." Take back my share, Toffy.

THE TOFF. What's the matter? What are you driving at?

SNIGGERS. Take it back, Toffy.

THE TOFF. Answer me, what are you up to?

SNIGGERS. I don't want my share any more.

BILL. Have you seen the police?

[ALBERT pulls out his knife.]

SNIGGERS. There's no police.

THE TOFF. Well, then, what's the matter?

BILL. Out with it.

SNIGGERS. I swear to God. . . .

ALBERT. Well?

THE TOFF. Don't interrupt.

SNIGGERS. I swear I saw something *what I didn't like*.

THE TOFF. What you didn't like?

SNIGGERS. [in tears.] O Toffy, Toffy, take it back. Take my share. Say you take it.

THE TOFF. What has he seen?

[Dead silence, only broken by SNIGGERS' sobs. Then steps are heard. Enter a hideous idol. It is blind and gropes its way to the ruby and picks it up and screws it into a socket in the forehead. SNIGGERS still weeps softly; the rest stare in horror. The idol steps out, not groping. Its steps move off, then stop.]

THE TOFF. O great heavens!

ALBERT. [in a childish, plaintive voice.] What is it, Toffy?

BILL. Albert, it is that obscene idol [in a whisper] come from India.

ALBERT. It is gone.

BILL. It has taken its eye.

SNIGGERS. We are saved.

A VOICE OFF. [with outlandish accent.] Meestaire William Jones, Able Seaman.

[THE TOFF has never spoken, never moved. He only gazes stupidly in horror.]

BILL. Albert, Albert, what is this?

[He rises and walks out. One moan is heard. SNIGGERS goes to the window. He falls back sickly.]

ALBERT. [in a whisper.] What has happened?

SNIGGERS. I have seen it. I have seen it. Oh, I have seen it!

[He returns to table.]

THE TOFF. [laying his hand very gently on SNIGGERS' arm, speaking softly and winningly.] What was it, Sniggers?

SNIGGERS. I have seen it.

ALBERT. What?

SNIGGERS. Oh!

VOICE. Meestaire Albert Thomas, Able Seaman.

ALBERT. Must I go, Toffy, Toffy,
must I go?

SNIGGERS. [*clutching him.*] Don't
move.

ALBERT. [*going.*] Toffy, Toffy.
[*Exit.*]

VOICE. Meestaire Jacob Smith, Able
Seaman.

SNIGGERS. I can't go, Toffy. I can't
go. I can't do it. [*He goes.*]

VOICE. Meestaire Arnold Everett
Scott-Fortescue, late Esquire, Able
Seaman.

THE TOFF. I did not foresee it.
[*Exit.*]

THE INTRUDER *

MAURICE MAETERLINCK

CHARACTERS

THE GRANDFATHER [*blind*].

THE FATHER.

THE THREE DAUGHTERS.

THE UNCLE.

THE SERVANT.

SCENE—A sombre room in an old *château*. A door on the right, a door on the left, and a small concealed door in a corner. At the back, stained-glass windows, in which green is the dominant color, and a glass door giving on to a terrace. A big Dutch clock in one corner. A lighted lamp.

THE THREE DAUGHTERS. Come here, grandfather. Sit down under the lamp.

THE GRANDFATHER. There does not seem to me to be much light here.

THE FATHER. Shall we go out on the terrace, or stay in this room?

THE UNCLE. Would it not be better to stay here? It has rained the whole week, and the nights are damp and cold.

THE ELDEST DAUGHTER. But the stars are shining.

THE UNCLE. Oh, the stars—that's nothing.

THE GRANDFATHER. We had better stay here. One never knows what may happen.

THE FATHER. There is no longer any cause for anxiety. The danger is over, and she is saved . . .

THE GRANDFATHER. I believe she is not doing so well . . .

THE FATHER. Why do you say that?

THE GRANDFATHER. I have heard her voice.

THE FATHER. But since the doctors assure us we may be easy . . .

THE UNCLE. You know quite well that your father-in-law likes to alarm us needlessly.

THE GRANDFATHER. I don't see things as you do.

THE UNCLE. You ought to rely on us, then, who can see. She looked very well this afternoon. She is sleeping quietly now; and we are not going to mar, needlessly, the first pleasant evening that chance has put in our way. . . . It seems to me we have a perfect right to peace, and even to laugh a little, this evening, without fear.

THE FATHER. That's true; this is the first time I have felt at home with my family since this terrible confinement.

THE UNCLE. When once illness has come into a house, it is as though a stranger had forced himself into the family circle.

THE FATHER. And then you understand, too, that you can count on no one outside the family.

THE UNCLE. You are quite right.

THE GRANDFATHER. Why couldn't I see my poor daughter to-day?

THE UNCLE. You know quite well the doctor forbade it.

THE GRANDFATHER. I do not know what to think . . .

THE UNCLE. It is useless to worry.

THE GRANDFATHER. [*pointing to the door on the right.*] She cannot hear us?

THE FATHER. We will not talk too loud; besides, the door is very thick, and the Sister of Mercy is with her, and she is sure to warn us if we are making too much noise.

THE GRANDFATHER. [*pointing to the door on the right.*] He cannot hear us?

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THE FATHER. No, no.

THE GRANDFATHER. He is asleep?

THE FATHER. I suppose so.

THE GRANDFATHER. Some one had better go and see.

THE UNCLE. The little one would cause *me* more anxiety than your wife. It is now several weeks since he was born, and he has scarcely stirred. He has not cried once all the time! He is like a wax doll.

THE GRANDFATHER. I think he will be deaf—dumb, too, perhaps—the usual result of a marriage between cousins . . . [*A reproving silence.*]

THE FATHER. I could almost wish him ill for the suffering he has caused his mother.

THE UNCLE. Do be reasonable; it is not the poor little thing's fault. He is quite alone in the room?

THE FATHER. Yes; the doctor does not wish him to stay in his mother's room any longer.

THE UNCLE. But the nurse is with him?

THE FATHER. No; she has gone to rest a little; she has well deserved it these last few days. Ursula, just go and see if he is asleep.

THE ELDEST DAUGHTER. Yes, father.

[*THE THREE SISTERS get up, and go into the room on the right, hand in hand.*]

THE FATHER. When will your sister come?

THE UNCLE. I think she will come about nine.

THE FATHER. It is past nine. I hope she will come this evening, my wife is so anxious to see her.

THE UNCLE. She is sure to come. This will be the first time she has been here?

THE FATHER. She has never been in the house.

THE UNCLE. It is very difficult for her to leave her convent.

THE FATHER. Will she be alone?

THE UNCLE. I expect one of the nuns will come with her. They are not allowed to go out alone.

THE FATHER. But she is the Superior.

THE UNCLE. The rule is the same for all.

THE GRANDFATHER. Do you not feel anxious?

THE UNCLE. Why should we feel anxious? 'What's the good of harping on that? There is nothing more to fear.

THE GRANDFATHER. Your sister is older than you?

THE UNCLE. She is the eldest.

THE GRANDFATHER. I do not know what ails me; I feel uneasy. I wish your sister were here.

THE UNCLE. She will come; she promised to.

THE GRANDFATHER. Ah, if this evening were only over!

[*THE THREE DAUGHTERS come in again.*]

THE FATHER. He is asleep?

THE ELDEST DAUGHTER. Yes, father, he is sleeping soundly.

THE UNCLE. What shall we do while we are waiting?

THE GRANDFATHER. Waiting for what?

THE UNCLE. Waiting for our sister.

THE FATHER. You see nothing coming, Ursula?

THE ELDEST DAUGHTER. [*at the window.*] Nothing, father.

THE FATHER. Not in the avenue? Can you see the avenue?

THE DAUGHTER. Yes, father; it is moonlight, and I can see the avenue as far as the cypress wood.

THE GRANDFATHER. And you do not see any one?

THE DAUGHTER. No one, grandfather.

THE UNCLE. What sort of night is it?

THE DAUGHTER. Very fine. Do you hear the nightingales?

THE UNCLE. Yes, yes.

THE DAUGHTER. A little wind is rising in the avenue.

THE GRANDFATHER. A little wind in the avenue?

THE DAUGHTER. Yes; the trees are trembling a little.

THE UNCLE. I am surprised that my sister is not here yet.

THE GRANDFATHER. I cannot hear the nightingales any longer.

THE DAUGHTER. I think some one has come into the garden, grandfather.

THE GRANDFATHER. Who is it?

THE DAUGHTER. I do not know; I can see no one.

THE UNCLE. Because there is no one there.

THE DAUGHTER. There must be someone in the garden; the nightingales have suddenly ceased singing.

THE GRANDFATHER. But I do not hear any one coming.

THE DAUGHTER. Some one must be passing by the pond, because the swans are ruffled.

ANOTHER DAUGHTER. All the fishes in the pond are diving suddenly.

THE FATHER. You cannot see any one.

THE DAUGHTER. No one, father.

THE FATHER. But the pond lies in the moonlight . . .

THE DAUGHTER. Yes; I can see that the swans are ruffled.

THE UNCLE. I am sure it is my sister who is scaring them. She must have come in by the little gate.

THE FATHER. I cannot understand why the dogs do not bark.

THE DAUGHTER. I can see the watchdog right at the back of his kennel. The swans are crossing to the other bank! . . .

THE UNCLE. They are afraid of my sister. I will go and see. [*he calls.*] Sister! sister! Is that you? . . . There is no one there.

THE DAUGHTER. I am sure that some one has come into the garden. You will see.

THE UNCLE. But she would answer me!

THE GRANDFATHER. Are not the nightingales beginning to sing again, Ursula?

THE DAUGHTER. I cannot hear one anywhere.

THE GRANDFATHER. But there is no noise.

THE FATHER. There is a silence of the grave.

THE GRANDFATHER. It must be a stranger that is frightening them, for if it were one of the family they would not be silent.

THE UNCLE. How much longer are you going to discuss these nightingales?

THE GRANDFATHER. Are all the windows open, Ursula?

THE DAUGHTER. The glass door is open, grandfather.

THE GRANDFATHER. It seems to me that the cold is penetrating into the room.

THE DAUGHTER. There is a little wind in the garden, grandfather, and the rose leaves are falling.

THE FATHER. Well, shut the door. It is late.

THE DAUGHTER. Yes, father . . . I cannot shut the door.

THE TWO OTHER DAUGHTERS. We cannot shut the door.

THE GRANDFATHER. Why, what is the matter with the door, my children?

THE UNCLE. You need not say that in such an extraordinary voice. I will go and help them.

THE ELDEST DAUGHTER. We cannot manage to shut it quite.

THE UNCLE. It is because of the damp. Let us all push together. There must be something in the way.

THE FATHER. The carpenter will set it right to-morrow.

THE GRANDFATHER. Is the carpenter coming to-morrow?

THE DAUGHTER. Yes, grandfather; he is coming to do some work in the cellar.

THE GRANDFATHER. He will make a noise in the house.

THE DAUGHTER. I will tell him to work quietly.

[*Suddenly the sound of a scythe being sharpened is heard outside.*]

THE GRANDFATHER. [*with a shudder.*] Oh!

THE UNCLE. What is that?

THE DAUGHTER. I don't quite know; I think it is the gardener. I cannot quite see; he is in the shadow of the house.

THE FATHER. Is not to-morrow Sunday?—Yes.—I noticed that the grass was very long round the house.

THE GRANDFATHER. It seems to me that his scythe makes as much noise . . .

THE DAUGHTER. He is mowing near the house.

THE GRANDFATHER. Can you see him, Ursula?

THE DAUGHTER. No, grandfather. He is standing in the dark.

THE GRANDFATHER. I am afraid he will wake my daughter.

THE UNCLE. We can scarcely hear him.

THE GRANDFATHER. It sounds as if he were mowing inside the house.

THE UNCLE. The invalid will not hear it; there is no danger.

THE FATHER. It seems to me that the lamp is not burning well this evening.

THE UNCLE. It wants filling.

THE FATHER. I saw it filled this morning. It has burnt badly since the window was shut.

THE UNCLE. I fancy the chimney is dirty.

THE FATHER. It will burn better presently.

THE DAUGHTER. Grandfather is asleep. He has not slept for three nights.

THE FATHER. He has been so much worried.

THE UNCLE. He always worries too much. At times he will not listen to reason.

THE FATHER. It is quite excusable at his age.

THE UNCLE. God knows what we shall be like at his age!

THE FATHER. He is nearly eighty.

THE UNCLE. Then he has a right to be strange.

THE FATHER. He is like all blind people.

THE UNCLE. They think too much.

THE FATHER. They have too much time to spare.

THE UNCLE. They have nothing else to do.

THE FATHER. And, besides, they have no distractions.

THE UNCLE. That must be terrible.

THE FATHER. Apparently one gets used to it.

THE UNCLE. I cannot imagine it.

THE FATHER. They are certainly to be pitied.

THE UNCLE. Not to know where one is, not to know where one has come from, not to know whither one is going, not to be able to distinguish midday from midnight, or summer from winter—and always darkness, darkness! I would rather not live. Is it absolutely incurable?

THE FATHER. Apparently so.

THE UNCLE. But he is not absolutely blind?

THE FATHER. He can perceive a strong light.

THE UNCLE. Let us take care of our poor eyes.

THE FATHER. He often has strange ideas.

THE UNCLE. At times he is not at all amusing.

THE FATHER. He says absolutely everything he thinks.

THE UNCLE. But he was not always like this?

THE FATHER. No; once he was as rational as we are; he never said anything extraordinary. I am afraid Ursula encourages him a little too much; she answers all his questions . . .

THE UNCLE. It would be better not to answer them. It's a mistaken kindness to him. [*Ten o'clock strikes.*]

THE GRANDFATHER. [*waking up.*] Am I facing the glass door?

THE DAUGHTER. You have had a nice sleep, grandfather?

THE GRANDFATHER. Am I facing the glass door?

THE DAUGHTER. Yes, grandfather.

THE GRANDFATHER. There is nobody at the glass door?

THE DAUGHTER. No, grandfather; I do not see any one.

THE GRANDFATHER. I thought some one was waiting. No one has come?

THE DAUGHTER. No one, grandfather.

THE GRANDFATHER. [*to the UNCLE and FATHER.*] And your sister has not come?

THE UNCLE. It is too late; she will not come now. It is not nice of her.

THE FATHER. I'm beginning to be anxious about her.

[*A noise, as of some one coming into the house.*]

THE UNCLE. She is here! Did you hear?

THE FATHER. Yes; some one has come in at the basement.

THE UNCLE. It must be our sister. I recognized her step.

THE GRANDFATHER. I heard slow footsteps.

THE FATHER. She came in very quietly.

THE UNCLE. She knows there is an invalid.

THE GRANDFATHER. I hear nothing now.

THE UNCLE. She will come up directly; they will tell her we are here.

THE FATHER. I am glad she has come.

THE UNCLE. I was sure she would come this evening.

THE GRANDFATHER. She is a very long time coming up.

THE UNCLE. It must be she.

THE FATHER. We are not expecting any other visitors.

THE GRANDFATHER. I cannot hear any noise in the basement.

THE FATHER. I will call the servants. We shall know how things stand.

[*He pulls a bell-rope.*]

THE GRANDFATHER. I can hear a noise on the stairs already.

THE FATHER. It is the servant coming up.

THE GRANDFATHER. To me it sounds as if she were not alone.

THE FATHER. She is coming up slowly . . .

THE GRANDFATHER. I hear your sister's step!

THE FATHER. I can only hear the servant.

THE GRANDFATHER. I hear your sister's step!

THE FATHER. I can only hear the servant.

THE GRANDFATHER. It is your sister! It is your sister!

[*There is a knock at the little door.*]

THE UNCLE. She is knocking at the door of the back stairs.

THE FATHER. I will go and open it myself. [*he opens the little door partly; the SERVANT remains outside in the opening.*] Where are you?

THE SERVANT. Here, sir.

THE GRANDFATHER. Your sister is at the door?

THE UNCLE. I can only see the servant.

THE FATHER. It is only the servant. [*to the SERVANT.*] Who was that, that came into the house?

THE SERVANT. Came into the house?

THE FATHER. Yes; some one came in just now?

THE SERVANT. No one came in, sir.

THE GRANDFATHER. Who is it sighing like that?

THE UNCLE. It is the servant; she is out of breath.

THE GRANDFATHER. Is she crying?

THE UNCLE. No; why should she be crying?

THE FATHER. [*to the SERVANT.*] No one came in just now?

THE SERVANT. No, sir.

THE FATHER. But we heard some one open the door!

THE SERVANT. It was I shutting the door.

THE FATHER. It was open?

THE SERVANT. Yes, sir.

THE FATHER. Why was it open this time of night?

THE SERVANT. I do not know, sir. I had shut it myself.

THE FATHER. Then who was it that opened it?

THE SERVANT. I do not know, sir. Some one must have gone out after me, sir . . .

THE FATHER. You must be careful. —Don't push the door; you know what a noise it makes!

THE SERVANT. But, sir, I am not touching the door.

THE FATHER. But you are. You are pushing as if you were trying to get into the room.

THE SERVANT. But, sir, I am three yards away from the door.

THE FATHER. Don't talk so loud . . .

THE GRANDFATHER. Are they putting out the light?

THE ELDEST DAUGHTER. No, grandfather.

THE GRANDFATHER. It seems to me it has grown pitch dark all at once.

THE FATHER. [*to the SERVANT.*] You can go down again now; but do not make so much noise on the stairs.

THE SERVANT. I did not make any noise on the stairs.

THE FATHER. I tell you that you did make a noise. Go down quietly; you will wake your mistress. And if any one comes now, say that we are not at home.

THE UNCLE. Yes; say that we are not at home.

THE GRANDFATHER. [*shuddering.*] You must not say that!

THE FATHER. . . . Except to my sister and the doctor.

THE UNCLE. When will the doctor come?

THE FATHER. He will not be able to come before midnight.

[*He shuts the door; a clock is heard striking eleven.*]

THE GRANDFATHER. She has come in?

THE FATHER. Who?

THE GRANDFATHER. The Servant.

THE FATHER. No, she has gone downstairs.

THE GRANDFATHER. I thought that she was sitting at the table.

THE UNCLE. The servant?

THE GRANDFATHER. Yes.

THE UNCLE. That would complete one's happiness!

THE GRANDFATHER. No one has come into the room?

THE FATHER. No; no one has come in.

THE GRANDFATHER. And your sister is not here?

THE UNCLE. Our sister has not come.

THE GRANDFATHER. You want to deceive me.

THE UNCLE. Deceive you?

THE GRANDFATHER. Ursula, tell me the truth, for the love of God!

THE ELDEST DAUGHTER. Grandfather! Grandfather! what is the matter with you?

THE GRANDFATHER. Something has happened! I am sure my daughter is worse . . .

THE UNCLE. Are you dreaming?

THE GRANDFATHER. You do not want to tell me! . . . I can see quite well there is something . . .

THE UNCLE. In that case, you can see better than we can.

THE GRANDFATHER. Ursula, tell me the truth!

THE DAUGHTER. But we have told you the truth, grandfather!

THE GRANDFATHER. You do not speak in your ordinary voice.

THE FATHER. That is because you frighten her.

THE GRANDFATHER. Your voice is changed, too.

THE FATHER. You are going mad!

[*He and the UNCLE make signs to each other to signify that the GRANDFATHER has lost his reason.*]

THE GRANDFATHER. I can hear quite well that you are afraid.

THE FATHER. But what should we be afraid of?

THE GRANDFATHER. Why do you want to deceive me?

THE UNCLE. Who is thinking of deceiving you?

THE GRANDFATHER. Why have you put out the light?

THE UNCLE. But the light has not been put out; there is as much light as there was before.

THE DAUGHTER. It seems to me that the lamp has gone down.

THE FATHER. I see as well now as ever.

THE GRANDFATHER. I have mill-stones on my eyes! Tell me, girls, what is going on here! Tell me, for the love of God, you who can see! I am here, all alone, in darkness without

end! I do not know who seats himself beside me! I do not know what is happening a yard from me! . . . Why were you talking under your breath just now?

THE FATHER. No one was talking under his breath.

THE GRANDFATHER. You did talk in a low voice at the door.

THE FATHER. You heard all I said.

THE GRANDFATHER. You brought some one into the room! . . .

THE FATHER. But I tell you no one has come in!

THE GRANDFATHER. Is it your sister or a priest?—You should not try to deceive me.—Ursula, who was it that came in?

THE DAUGHTER. No one, grandfather.

THE GRANDFATHER. You must not try to deceive me; I know what I know.—How many of us are there here?

THE DAUGHTER. There are six of us round the table, grandfather.

THE GRANDFATHER. You are all round the table?

THE DAUGHTER. Yes, grandfather.

THE GRANDFATHER. You are there, Paul?

THE FATHER. Yes.

THE GRANDFATHER. You are there, Oliver?

THE UNCLE. Yes, of course I am here, in my usual place. That's not alarming, is it?

THE GRANDFATHER. You are there, Genevieve?

ONE OF THE DAUGHTERS. Yes, grandfather.

THE GRANDFATHER. You are there, Gertrude?

ANOTHER DAUGHTER. Yes, grandfather.

THE GRANDFATHER. You are here, Ursula?

THE ELDEST DAUGHTER. Yes, grandfather; next to you.

THE GRANDFATHER. And who is that sitting there?

THE DAUGHTER. Where do you mean, grandfather?—There is no one.

THE GRANDFATHER. There, there—in the midst of us!

THE DAUGHTER. But there is no one, grandfather!

THE FATHER. We tell you there is no one!

THE GRANDFATHER. But you cannot see—any of you!

THE UNCLE. Pshaw! You are joking.

THE GRANDFATHER. I do not feel inclined for joking, I can assure you.

THE UNCLE. Then believe those who can see.

THE GRANDFATHER. [*undecidedly.*] I thought there was some one . . . I believe I shall not live long . . .

THE UNCLE. Why should we deceive you? What use would there be in that?

THE FATHER. It would be our duty to tell you the truth . . .

THE UNCLE. What would be the good of deceiving each other?

THE FATHER. You could not live in error long.

THE GRANDFATHER. [*trying to rise.*] I should like to pierce this darkness! . . .

THE FATHER. Where do you want to go?

THE GRANDFATHER. Over there . . .

THE FATHER. Don't be so anxious.

THE UNCLE. You are strange this evening.

THE GRANDFATHER. It is all of you who seem to me to be strange!

THE FATHER. Do you want anything?

THE GRANDFATHER. I do not know what ails me.

THE ELDEST DAUGHTER. Grandfather! Grandfather! What do you want, grandfather?

THE GRANDFATHER. Give me your little hands, my children.

THE THREE DAUGHTERS. Yes, grandfather.

THE GRANDFATHER. Why are you all three trembling, girls?

THE ELDEST DAUGHTER. We are scarcely trembling at all, grandfather.

THE GRANDFATHER. I fancy you are all three pale.

THE ELDEST DAUGHTER. It is late, grandfather, and we are tired.

THE FATHER. You must go to bed, and grandfather himself would do well to take a little rest.

THE GRANDFATHER. I could not sleep to-night!

THE UNCLE. We will wait for the doctor.

THE GRANDFATHER. Prepare for the truth.

THE UNCLE. But there is no truth!

THE GRANDFATHER. Then I do not know what there is!

THE UNCLE. I tell you there is nothing at all!

THE GRANDFATHER. I wish I could see my poor daughter!

THE FATHER. But you know quite well it is impossible; she must not be awakened unnecessarily.

THE UNCLE. You will see her to-morrow.

THE GRANDFATHER. There is no sound in her room.

THE UNCLE. I should be uneasy if I heard any sound.

THE GRANDFATHER. It is a very long time since I saw my daughter! . . . I took her hands yesterday evening, but I could not see her! . . . I do not know what has become of her . . . I do not know how she is . . . I do not know what her face is like now! . . . She must have changed these weeks! . . . I felt the little bones of her cheeks under my hands . . . There is nothing but the darkness between her and me, and the rest of you! . . . I cannot go on living like this . . . this is not living . . . You sit there, all of you, looking with open eyes at my dead eyes, and not one of you has pity on me! . . . I do not know what ails me . . . No one tells me what ought to be told me . . . And everything is terrifying when one's dreams dwell upon it . . . But why are you not speaking?

THE UNCLE. What should we say, since you will not believe us?

THE GRANDFATHER. You are afraid of betraying yourselves!

THE FATHER. Come now, be rational!

THE GRANDFATHER. You have been hiding something from me for a long

time! . . . Something has happened in the house . . . But I am beginning to understand now . . . You have been deceiving me too long!—You fancy that I shall never know anything?—There are moments when I am less blind than you, you know! . . . Do you think I have not heard you whispering—for days and days—as if you were in the house of some one who had been hanged—I dare not say what I know this evening . . . But I shall know the truth! . . . I shall wait for you to tell me the truth; but I have known it for a long time, in spite of you!—And now, I feel that you are all paler than the dead!

THE THREE DAUGHTERS. Grandfather! Grandfather! What is the matter, grandfather?

THE GRANDFATHER. It is not you that I am speaking of, girls. No; it is not you that I am speaking of . . . I know quite well you would tell me the truth—if they were not by! . . . And besides, I feel sure that they are deceiving you as well . . . You will see, children—you will see! . . . Do not I hear you all sobbing?

THE FATHER. Is my wife really so ill?

THE GRANDFATHER. It is no good trying to deceive me any longer; it is too late now, and I know the truth better than you! . . .

THE UNCLE. But *we* are not blind; we are not.

THE FATHER. Would you like to go into your daughter's room? This misunderstanding must be put to an end.—Would you?

THE GRANDFATHER. [*becoming suddenly undecided.*] No, no, not now—not yet.

THE UNCLE. You see, you are not reasonable.

THE GRANDFATHER. One never knows how much a man has been unable to express in his life! . . . Who made that noise?

THE ELDEST DAUGHTER. It is the lamp flickering, grandfather.

THE GRANDFATHER. It seems to me to be very unsteady—very!

THE DAUGHTER. It is the cold wind troubling it . . .

THE UNCLE. There is no cold wind, the windows are shut.

THE DAUGHTER. I think it is going out.

THE FATHER. There is no more oil.

THE DAUGHTER. It has gone right out.

THE FATHER. We cannot stay like this in the dark.

THE UNCLE. Why not?—I am quite accustomed to it.

THE FATHER. There is a light in my wife's room.

THE UNCLE. We will take it from there presently, when the doctor has been.

THE FATHER. Well, we can see enough here; there is the light from outside.

THE GRANDFATHER. Is it light outside?

THE FATHER. Lighter than here.

THE UNCLE. For my part, I would as soon be in the dark.

THE FATHER. So would I. [*Silence.*]

THE GRANDFATHER. It seems to me the clock makes a great deal of noise . . .

THE ELDEST DAUGHTER. That is because we are not talking any more, grandfather.

THE GRANDFATHER. But why are all silent?

THE UNCLE. What do you want us to talk about?—You are really very peculiar to-night.

THE GRANDFATHER. Is it very dark in this room?

THE UNCLE. There is not much light.

[*Silence.*]

THE GRANDFATHER. I do not feel well, Ursula; open the window a little.

THE FATHER. Yes, child; open the window a little. I begin to feel the want of air myself.

[*The girl opens the window.*]

THE UNCLE. I really believe we have stayed shut up too long.

THE GRANDFATHER. Is the window open.

THE DAUGHTER. Yes, grandfather; it is wide open.

THE GRANDFATHER. One would not have thought it was open; there was not a sound outside.

THE DAUGHTER. No, grandfather, there is not the slightest sound.

THE FATHER. The silence is extraordinary!

THE DAUGHTER. One could hear an angel tread!

THE UNCLE. That is why I do not like the country.

THE GRANDFATHER. I wish I could hear some sound. What o'clock is it, Ursula?

THE DAUGHTER. It will soon be midnight, grandfather.

[*Here the UNCLE begins to pace up and down the room.*]

THE GRANDFATHER. Who is that walking around us like that?

THE UNCLE. Only I! Only I! Do not be frightened! I want to walk about a little. [*silence.*—But I am going to sit down again;—I cannot see where I am going. [*Silence.*]

THE GRANDFATHER. I wish I were out of this place.

THE DAUGHTER. Where would you like to go, grandfather?

THE GRANDFATHER. I do not know where—into another room, no matter where! no matter where!

THE FATHER. Where could we go?

THE UNCLE. It is too late to go anywhere else.

[*Silence. They are sitting, motionless, round the table.*]

THE GRANDFATHER. What is that I hear, Ursula?

THE DAUGHTER. Nothing, grandfather; it is the leaves falling.—Yes, it is the leaves falling on the terrace.

THE GRANDFATHER. Go and shut the window, Ursula.

THE DAUGHTER. Yes, grandfather.

[*She shuts the window, comes back, and sits down.*]

THE GRANDFATHER. I am cold. [*silence;* THE THREE SISTERS *kiss each other.*] What is that I hear now?

THE FATHER. It is the three sisters kissing each other.

THE UNCLE. It seems to me they are very pale this evening. [*Silence.*]

THE GRANDFATHER. What is that I hear now, Ursula?

THE DAUGHTER. Nothing, grandfather; it is the clasping of my hands. [Silence.]

THE GRANDFATHER. And that? . . .

THE DAUGHTER. I do not know, grandfather . . . perhaps my sisters are trembling a little? . . .

THE GRANDFATHER. I am afraid, too, my children.

[Here a ray of moonlight penetrates through a corner of the stained glass, and throws strange gleams here and there in the room. A clock strikes midnight; at the last stroke there is a very vague sound, as of some one rising in haste.]

THE GRANDFATHER. [shuddering with peculiar horror.] Who is that who got up?

THE UNCLE. No one got up!

THE FATHER. I did not get up!

THE THREE DAUGHTERS. Nor I!—Nor I!—Nor I!

THE GRANDFATHER. Some one got up from the table!

THE UNCLE. Light the lamp! . . .

[Cries of terror are suddenly heard from the child's room, on the right; these cries continue, with gradations of horror, until the end of the scene.]

THE FATHER. Listen to the child!

THE UNCLE. He has never cried before!

THE FATHER. Let us go and see him!

THE UNCLE. The light! The light!

[At this moment, quick and heavy steps are heard in the room on the left.—Then a deathly silence.—They listen in mute terror, until the door of the room opens slowly; the light from it is cast into the room where they are sitting, and the Sister of Mercy appears on the threshold, in her black garments, and bows as she makes the sign of the cross, to announce the death of the wife. They understand, and, after a moment of hesitation and fright, silently enter the chamber of death, while the UNCLE politely steps aside on the threshold to let the three girls pass. The blind man, left alone, gets up, agitated, and feels his way round the table in the darkness.]

THE GRANDFATHER. Where are you going?—Where are you going?—The girls have left me all alone!

[Curtain.]

THE BOOR *

ANTON TCHEKOFF

English version by Barrett H. Clark and H. R. Banknag

CHARACTERS

HELENA IVANOVNA POPOV, a young widow
mistress of a country estate.
GRIGORI STEPANOVITCH SMIRNOV, proprie-
tor of a country estate.
LUKA, servant of MRS. POPOV.
A gardener. A coachman. Several work-
men.

SCENE—The estate of MRS. POPOV.

TIME—The present.

SCENE—A well-furnished reception-
room in MRS. POPOV's home. MRS.
POPOV is discovered in deep mourning,
sitting on a sofa, gazing steadfastly at
a photograph. LUKA is also present.

LUKA. It isn't right, ma'am. You're
wearing yourself out! The maid and
the cook have gone looking for berries;
everything that breathes is enjoying
life, even the cat knows how to be
happy—slips about the courtyard and
catches birds—but you hide yourself
here in the house as though it were a
cloister. By actual reckoning you
haven't left this house for a whole year.

MRS. POPOV. I shall never leave it—
why should I? My life is over. He
lies in his grave, and I have buried my-
self within these four walls. We are
both dead.

LUKA. There you go again! It's too
dreadful to listen to, so it is! Nikolai
Michailovitch is dead; it was the will
of the Lord, and the Lord has given him
eternal peace. You have grieved over
it and that ought to be enough. Now

* This translation of *The Boor* is reprinted
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it's time to stop. One can't weep and
wear mourning forever! My wife died
a few years ago. I grieved for her. I
wept a whole month—and then it was
over. Must one be forever singing
lamentations? That would be more
than your husband was worth! [*he
sighs.*] You have neglected all your
neighbors. You don't go out and you
receive no one. We live,—you'll par-
don me—like spiders, and the good
light of day we never see. All the
livery is eaten by the mice—as though
there weren't any more nice people in
the world! Why, the whole neighbor-
hood is full of gentlefolk. The regi-
ment is stationed in Roblov—officers—
simply beautiful! One can't see
enough of them! Every Friday a ball,
and military music daily. Oh, my
dear, dear madam, young and pretty
as you are, if you'd only let your
spirits live! Beauty can't last forever.
When ten short years are over, you'll
be glad enough to go out a bit and
meet the officers—and then it'll be too
late.

MRS. POPOV. [*resolutely.*] Please
don't speak of these things again. You
know very well that since the death
of Nikolai Michailovitch my life means
absolutely nothing to me. You think
I live, but it only seems so. Do you
understand? Oh, that his departed
soul may see how I love him! I know,
it's no secret to you; he was often un-
just toward me, cruel, and—he wasn't
faithful, but I shall be faithful to the
grave and prove to him how I can love.
There, in the Beyond, he'll find me the
same as I was until his death.

LUKA. What is the use of all these

words, when you'd so much rather go walking in the garden or order Toby or Welikan harnessed to the trap, and visit the neighbors?

MRS. POPOV. [*weeping.*] Oh!

LUKA. Madam, dear madam, what is it? In Heaven's name!

MRS. POPOV. He loved Toby so! He always drove him to the Kortschagins or the Vlassovs. What a wonderful horseman he was! How fine he looked when he pulled the reins! Toby, Toby—give him an extra measure of oats today!

LUKA. Yes, ma'am.

[*A bell rings loudly.*]

MRS. POPOV. [*shudders.*] What's that? I am at home to no one.

LUKA. Yes, ma'am.

[*He goes out, center.*]

MRS. POPOV. [*gazing at the photograph.*] You shall see, Nikolai, how I can love and forgive! My love will die only with me—when my poor heart stops beating. [*she smiles through her tears.*] Aren't you ashamed? I have been a good, true wife, I have imprisoned myself and I shall remain true until death, and you—you—you're not ashamed of yourself, my dear monster! You used to quarrel with me, left me alone for weeks—

[*LUKA enters in great excitement.*]

LUKA. Oh, ma'am, someone is asking for you, insists on seeing you—

MRS. POPOV. You told him that since my husband's death I receive no one?

LUKA. I did, but he won't listen; says it's a pressing matter.

MRS. POPOV. I will receive no one.

LUKA. I told him that, but he's a wild man, he swore and pushed himself into the room; he's in the dining-room now.

MRS. POPOV. [*excitedly.*] Good. Show him in. The impudent—!

[*LUKA goes out, center.*]

MRS. POPOV. What a bore people are! What can they want with me? Why do they disturb my peace? [*she sighs.*] Yes, it is clear I must enter a convent. [*meditatively.*] Yes, a convent.

[*SMIRNOV enters, followed by LUKA.*]

SMIRNOV. [*to LUKA.*] Fool, you make too much noise! You're an ass! [*discovering MRS. POPOV; politely.*] Madam, I have the honor to introduce myself: Lieutenant in the Artillery, retired, country gentleman, Grigori Stepanovitch Smirnov! I'm compelled to bother you about an exceedingly important matter.

MRS. POPOV. [*without offering her hand.*] What is it you wish?

SMIRNOV. Your deceased husband, with whom I had the honor to be acquainted, left me two notes amounting to about twelve hundred rubles. Inasmuch as I am to pay the interest tomorrow on a loan from the Agrarian Bank, I should like to request, madam, that you pay me the money today.

MRS. POPOV. Twelve hundred—and for what was my husband indebted to you?

SMIRNOV. He bought oats from me.

MRS. POPOV. [*with a sigh, to LUKA.*] Don't forget to give Toby an extra measure of oats. [*LUKA goes out.*]

MRS. POPOV. [*to SMIRNOV.*] If Nikolai Michailovitch is indebted to you, I shall of course pay you, but I am sorry I haven't the money today. Tomorrow my manager returns from the city and I shall notify him to pay you what is due you, but until then I cannot satisfy your request. Furthermore, today is just seven months since the death of my husband, and I am in no mood to discuss money matters.

SMIRNOV. But I am in a mood to fly up the chimney feet foremost if I can't lay hands on that interest tomorrow. They'll seize my estate!

MRS. POPOV. Day after tomorrow you will receive the money.

SMIRNOV. I don't need the money day after tomorrow, I need it today.

MRS. POPOV. I am sorry I cannot pay you today.

SMIRNOV. And I can't wait until day after tomorrow.

MRS. POPOV. But what can I do if I haven't it?

SMIRNOV. You can't pay?

MRS. POPOV. I cannot.

SMIRNOV. Is that your last word?

MRS. POPOV. My last.

SMIRNOV. Absolutely?

MRS. POPOV. Absolutely.

SMIRNOV. Thank you. [*he shrugs his shoulders.*] And they expect me to stand for that. The toll-gatherer just now met me in the road and asked me why I was always worrying. Why in Heaven's name shouldn't I worry? I need money. I feel the knife at my throat. Yesterday morning I left my house in the early dawn and called on all my debtors. If even one of them had paid what he owed me! I worked the skin off my fingers! The devil knows in what sort of inn I slept: in a room with a barrel of brandy! And now at last I come here, seventy versts from home, expect a little money, and all you give me is *moods*. Why shouldn't I worry?

MRS. POPOV. I thought I made it plain to you that when my manager returns from town, you will receive your money.

SMIRNOV. I did not come to see the manager, I came to see you. What the devil—pardon the language—do I care for your manager?

MRS. POPOV. Really, sir, I am not used to such language or such manners. I shan't listen to you.

[*She goes out, left.*]

SMIRNOV. What can one say to that? Moods! Seven months since her husband died! Do I have to pay the interest or not? I repeat the question, have I to pay the interest or not? The husband is dead and all that; the manager is—the devil with him!—traveling somewhere. Now, tell me, what am I to do? Shall I run away from my creditors in a balloon? Or knock my head against a stone wall? If I call on Grusdev he chooses to be “not at home,” I quarreled with Kurzin and came near throwing him out of the window, Masutov is ill, and this woman has—moods! Not one of them will pay up! All because I've spoiled them, because I'm an old whiner, a dish-rag! I'm too tender-hearted with them. But

wait! I'll allow nobody to play tricks with me, the devil take 'em all! I'll stay here and not budge until she pays! Brr! How angry I am, how terribly angry I am! Every tendon trembles with anger and I can hardly breathe! I'm falling ill! [*he calls out.*] Servant!

[*LUKA enters.*]

LUKA. What is it you wish?

SMIRNOV. Bring me Kvas—or water!

[*LUKA goes out.*]

Well, what can we do? She hasn't the cash? What sort of logic is that? A fellow stands with the knife at his throat, needs money, is on the point of hanging himself, and she won't pay because she isn't in the mood to discuss money matters. Woman's logic! That's why I never liked to talk to women. I'd rather sit on a powder barrel. Brr! —I'm getting cold as ice, this affair has made me so angry! I need only to see such a romantic creature from a distance to get so angry that I have cramps in my calves! It's enough to make one yell for help!

[*Enter LUKA.*]

LUKA. [*hands him water.*] Madam is ill and is not receiving.

SMIRNOV. March! [*LUKA goes out.*] Ill and isn't receiving! All right, it's not necessary. I won't receive, either! I'll sit here and stay until you bring the money. If you're ill a week, I'll sit here a week. If you're ill a year, I'll sit here a year. Heaven is my witness, I'll get the money. You don't disturb me with your mourning—or with your dimples. We know these dimples! [*he calls out the window.*] Simon, unharness! We aren't going yet. I'm staying here. Tell them in the stable to give the horse some oats. The left horse has twisted the bridle again. [*imitating him.*] Stop! I'll show you how. Stop! [*leaves window.*] Awful! Unbearable heat, no money, no sleep last night and now—mourning-dresses and moods! My head aches; perhaps I ought to have a drink. Ye-s, I must have a drink. [*calling.*] Servant!

LUKA. What is it you wish?

SMIRNOV. Drink!

[LUKA goes out. SMIRNOV sits down and looks at his clothes.]

Ugh, a fine figure! No denying it. Dust, dirty boots, unwashed, uncombed, straw on my vest—the lady probably took me for a highwayman. [he yawns.] It was a little impolite to come into a drawing-room with such clothes. Oh, well, no harm done. I'm not here as guest. I'm a creditor. And there is no special costume for creditors.

LUKA. [entering with glass.] You take great liberties, sir.

SMIRNOV. [angrily.] What?

LUKA. I—I—I just—

SMIRNOV. Whom are you talking to? Keep quiet.

LUKA. [angrily.] Nice mess! This fellow won't leave. [He goes out.]

SMIRNOV. Lord, how angry I am! Angry enough to throw mud at the whole world! I feel sick! Servant!

[MRS. POPOV comes in with down-cast eyes.]

MRS. POPOV. Sir, in my solitude I have become unaccustomed to the human voice and I cannot stand the sound of loud talking. I beg you, please to cease disturbing my rest.

SMIRNOV. Pay me my money and I'll leave.

MRS. POPOV. I told you once, plainly, in your native tongue, that I haven't the money at hand; wait until the day after tomorrow.

SMIRNOV. And I had the honor of informing you in your native tongue that I need the money, not the day after tomorrow, but today. If you don't pay me today, I shall have to hang myself tomorrow.

MRS. POPOV. But what can I do if I haven't the money?

SMIRNOV. So you are not going to pay me immediately?

MRS. POPOV. I cannot.

SMIRNOV. Then I'll sit here until I get it. [he sits down.] You will pay the day after tomorrow? Excellent! Here I stay until the day after to-

morrow. [jumps up.] I ask you, do I have to pay that interest tomorrow or not? Or do you think I'm joking?

MRS. POPOV. Sir, I beg of you, don't scream! This is not a stable.

SMIRNOV. I'm not talking about stables, I'm asking you whether I have to pay that interest tomorrow or not?

MRS. POPOV. You have no idea how to treat a lady. You are an ill-bred, vulgar person! Respectable people don't speak so to ladies.

SMIRNOV. How do you want one to speak to you? In French, perhaps! *Madame, je vous prie!* Pardon me for having disturbed you. What beautiful weather we are having! And how this mourning becomes you!

[He makes a low bow.]

MRS. POPOV. I think you very vulgar!

SMIRNOV. [imitating her.] Vulgar! I don't understand how to behave in the company of ladies. Madam, in the course of my life I have seen more women than you have sparrows. Three times have I fought duels for women; twelve I jilted and nine jilted me. There was a time when I played the fool, used honeyed words, and bowed and scraped. I loved, suffered, sighed to the moon, and melted in love's torments. I loved passionately, loved in every key, chattered like a magpie, sacrificed half my fortune to the tender passion. But now the devil knows I've had enough of it. Your obedient servant will let you lead him around by the nose no more. Enough! Black eyes, passionate eyes, coral lips, dimpled cheeks, whispers, soft, modest sighs,—for all that, madam, I wouldn't pay you a kopeck! I am not speaking of present company, but of women in general; from the tiniest to the greatest, they are conceited, hypocritical, chattering, odious, deceitful from top to toe; vain, petty, cruel with a maddening logic and [strikes his forehead] in this respect, excuse my frankness, one sparrow is worth ten of the afore-mentioned petticoat-philosophers. When one sees one of the romantic creatures before him, he imagines he is

looking at some holy being, so wonderful that its one breath could dissolve him in a sea of a thousand charms and delights; but if one looks into the soul—it's nothing but a common crocodile. [*he seizes the arm-chair and breaks it.*] And the worst of all is that this crocodile imagines it is a masterpiece of creation, and that it has a monopoly on all the tender passions. Devil hang me upside down if there is anything to love about a woman! When she is in love, she knows only how to complain and shed tears. If the man suffers and makes sacrifices, she swings her train about and tries to lead him by the nose. You have the misfortune to be a woman, and naturally you know woman's nature; tell me on your honor, have you ever in your life seen a woman who was really true and faithful? Never! Only the old and the deformed are true and faithful. It's easier to find a cat with horns or a white woodcock, than a faithful woman.

MRS. POPOV. But allow me to ask, who is true and faithful in love? The man, perhaps?

SMIRNOV. Yes, indeed! The man!

MRS. POPOV. The man! [*she laughs sarcastically.*] The man true and faithful in love! Well, that is something new! [*bitterly.*] How can you make such a statement? Men true and faithful! Since we have gone thus far, I may as well say that of all the men I have known, my husband was the best: I loved him passionately, with all my soul, as only a young, sensible woman can love; I gave him my youth, my happiness, my fortune, my life. I worshipped him like a heathen. And what happened? This best of men betrayed me in every possible way. After his death I found his desk filled with love-letters. While he was alive, he neglected me for months on end—it is horrible even to think about it; he made love to other women in my very presence, wasted my money and made fun of my feelings,—but in spite of everything, I trusted him and was true to him. More than that: he is dead and I am still true to him. I have

buried myself within these four walls and I shall wear this mourning to my grave.

SMIRNOV. [*laughing disrespectfully.*] Mourning! What on earth do you take me for? As if I didn't know why you wore this black domino and buried yourself within these four walls. So romantic! Some knight will pass the castle, gaze up at the windows and think to himself: "Here dwells the mysterious Tamara, who, for love of her husband, has buried herself within four walls." Oh, I understand the art!

MRS. POPOV. [*springing up.*] What do you mean by saying such things to me?

SMIRNOV. You have buried yourself alive, but meanwhile you have not forgotten to powder your nose!

MRS. POPOV. How dare you speak so?

SMIRNOV. Don't scream at me, please, I'm not the manager. Allow me to call things by their right names. I am not a woman, and I am accustomed to say what I think. So please don't scream.

MRS. POPOV. I'm not screaming. It is you who are screaming. Please leave me, I beg you.

SMIRNOV. Pay me my money and I'll leave.

MRS. POPOV. I won't give you the money.

SMIRNOV. You won't give me my money?

MRS. POPOV. I don't care what you do. You won't get a kopeck! Leave me!

SMIRNOV. As I haven't the pleasure of being either your husband or your fiancé, please don't make a scene. [*he sits down.*] I can't stand it.

MRS. POPOV. [*breathing hard.*] You are going to sit down?

SMIRNOV. I already have.

MRS. POPOV. Kindly leave the house!

SMIRNOV. Give me the money.

MRS. POPOV. I don't care to speak with impudent men. Leave! [*pause.*] You aren't going?

SMIRNOV. No.

MRS. POPOV. No?

SMIRNOV. No.

MRS. POPOV. Very well.

[*She rings the bell.*]

[*Enter LUKA.*]

MRS. POPOV. Luka, show the gentleman out.

LUKA. [*going to SMIRNOV.*] Sir, why don't you leave when you are ordered? What do you want?

SMIRNOV. [*jumping up.*] Whom do you think you are talking to? I'll grind you to powder.

LUKA. [*puts his hand to his heart.*] Good Lord! [*he drops into a chair.*] I'm ill, I can't breathe!

MRS. POPOV. Where is Dascha? [*calling.*] Dascha! Pelageja! Dascha! [*She rings.*]

LUKA. They're all gone! I'm ill! Water!

MRS. POPOV. [*to SMIRNOV.*] Leave! Get out!

SMIRNOV. Kindly be a little more polite!

MRS. POPOV. [*striking her fists and stamping her feet.*] You are vulgar! You're a boor! A monster!

SMIRNOV. What did you say?

MRS. POPOV. I said you were a boor, a monster!

SMIRNOV. [*steps toward her quickly.*] Permit me to ask by what right you insult me?

MRS. POPOV. Do you think I am afraid of you?

SMIRNOV. You think that because you are a romantic creature you can insult me without being punished? I challenge you!

LUKA. Merciful Heaven! Water!

SMIRNOV. A duel!

MRS. POPOV. Do you think because you have big fists and a neck like a bull's, I am afraid of you?

SMIRNOV. I allow no one to insult me, and I make no exception because you are a woman, one of the "weaker sex!"

MRS. POPOV. [*trying to cry him down.*] Boor, boor, boor!

SMIRNOV. It is high time we did away with the old superstition that it

is only the man who is forced to give satisfaction. If there is equity at all, let there be equity in all things. There's a limit!

MRS. POPOV. You wish to fight a duel? Very well.

SMIRNOV. Immediately.

MRS. POPOV. Immediately. My husband had pistols. I'll bring them. [*she hurries away, then turns.*] Oh, what a pleasure it will be to put a bullet in your impudent head! Devil take you!

[*She goes out.*]

SMIRNOV. I'll shoot her down! I'm no fledgling, no sentimental young puppy. For me, there is no weaker sex!

LUKA. Oh, sir! [*falls to his knees.*] Have mercy on me, an old man, and go away. You have frightened me to death already, and now you want to fight a duel.

SMIRNOV. [*paying no attention.*] A duel. That's equity for you! In that way the sexes are made equal. I'll shoot her down as a matter of principle. What can a person say to such a woman? [*imitating her.*] "Devil take you. I'll put a bullet in your impudent head." What can one say to that? She was angry, her eyes blazed, she accepted the challenge. On my honor, it's the first time in my life I ever saw such a woman.

LUKA. Oh, sir. Go away. Go away.

SMIRNOV. She is a woman! I can understand her. A real woman. No shilly-shallying, but fire, powder, and noise! It would be a pity to shoot a woman like that.

LUKA. [*weeping.*] Oh, sir, go away.

[*Enter Mrs. Popov.*]

MRS. POPOV. Here are the pistols. But before we have our duel, please show me how to shoot. I have never had a pistol in my hand before!

LUKA. God be merciful and have pity on us! I'll go and get the gardener and the coachman. Why has this horror come to us?

[*He goes out.*]

SMIRNOV. [*looking at the pistols.*]

You see, there are different kinds. There are special dueling pistols with cap and ball. But these are revolvers. Smith & Wesson, with ejectors; fine pistols! A pair like that cost at least ninety rubles. This is the way to hold a revolver. [*aside.*] Those eyes, those eyes! A real woman!

MRS. POPOV. Like this?

SMIRNOV. Yes. Then you pull the hammer back—so—then you aim—put your head back a little. Just stretch out your arm, please. So—then press your finger on the thing like that, and there you are! The chief point is this: don't get excited, don't hurry your aim, and take care your hand doesn't tremble.

MRS. POPOV. It isn't wise to shoot indoors; let's go into the garden.

SMIRNOV. Yes. I'll tell you now, I am going to shoot into the air.

MRS. POPOV. Nonsense! Why?

SMIRNOV. Because—because. That's my business.

MRS. POPOV. Coward! No, no, my dear sir, no flinching! Please follow me. I won't rest until I've made a hole in that head of yours I hate so much. Are you afraid?

SMIRNOV. Yes, I am afraid.

MRS. POPOV. You lie! Why won't you fight?

SMIRNOV. Because—because—I—like you.

MRS. POPOV. [*with an angry laugh.*] You like me! He dares to say he likes me! [*she points to the door.*] Go.

SMIRNOV. [*laying the revolver silently on the table, takes his hat and starts; at the door he stops a moment gazing at her silently, then he approaches her hesitating.*] Listen! Are you still angry? I was mad as the devil, but please understand me—how can I express myself? The thing is like this—such things are—[*he raises his voice.*] Now, is it my fault that you owe me money? [*grasps the back of the chair, which breaks.*] What rickety furniture you have! I like you! Do you understand? I—I'm almost in love!

MRS. POPOV. Leave! I hate you.

SMIRNOV. Lord! What a woman! I never in my life met one like her. I'm lost, ruined! I've been caught like a mouse in a trap.

MRS. POPOV. Go, or I'll shoot.

SMIRNOV. Shoot! What happiness to die in sight of those beautiful eyes, to die from the revolver in this little velvet hand! I'm mad! Consider it and decide immediately, for if I go now, we shall never see each other again. Decide—speak—I am a noble, a respectable man, I have an income of ten thousand, I can shoot a coin thrown into the air. I own several fine horses. Will you be my wife?

MRS. POPOV. [*swings the revolver angrily.*] I'll shoot!

SMIRNOV. My mind is not clear—I can't understand. Servant—water! I have fallen in love like any young man. [*he takes her hand and she cries with pain.*] I love you! [*he kneels.*] I love you as I never loved before. Twelve women I jilted, nine jilted me, but not one of them all have I loved as I love you. I am conquered, lost, I lie at your feet like a fool and beg for your hand. Shame and disgrace! For five years I haven't been in love; I thanked the Lord for it, and now I am caught. I beg for your hand! Yes, or no? Will you?—Good!

[*He gets up quickly and goes to the door.*]

MRS. POPOV. Wait a moment!

SMIRNOV. [*stopping.*] Well?

MRS. POPOV. Nothing. You may go. But—wait a moment. No, go on, go on. I hate you. Or—no: don't go. Oh, if you knew how angry I was, how angry! [*she throws the revolver on to the chair.*] My finger is swollen from this thing. [*she angrily tears out her handkerchief.*] What are you standing there for? Get out!

SMIRNOV. Farewell!

MRS. POPOV. Yes, go. [*cries out.*] Why are you going? Wait—no, go! Oh, how angry I am! Don't come too near, don't come too near—er—come—no nearer.

SMIRNOV. [*approaching her.*] How

angry I am with myself! To fall in love like a school-boy, to throw myself on my knees. I've got a chill! [*strongly.*] I love you. This is fine—all I needed was to fall in love. Tomorrow I have to pay my interest, the hay harvest has begun, and then you appear! [*he takes her in his arms.*] I can never forgive myself.

MRS. POPOV. Go away! Take your hands off me! I hate you—you—that is—
[*A long kiss.*]

[*Enter LUKA with an axe, the gardener with a rake, the coachman with a pitchfork, and working-men with poles.*]

LUKA. [*staring at the pair.*] Merciful Heavens! [*A long pause.*]

MRS. POPOV. [*dropping her eyes.*] Tell them in the stable that Toby isn't to have any oats.

[*Curtain.*]

OVERTONES *

ALICE GERSTENBERG

CHARACTERS

HARRIET, a cultured woman.

HETTY, her primitive self.

MARGARET, a cultured woman.

MAGGIE, her primitive self.

TIME—The present.

SCENE—HARRIET'S fashionable living-room. The door at the back leads to the hall. In the centre a tea table with a high-backed chair at each side.

HARRIET'S gown is a light, "jealous" green. Her counterpart, HETTY, wears a gown of the same design but in a darker shade. MARGARET wears a gown of lavender chiffon while her counterpart, MAGGIE, wears a gown of the same design in purple, a purple scarf veiling her face. Chiffon is used to give a sheer effect, suggesting a possibility of primitive and cultured selves merging into one woman. The primitive and cultured selves never come into actual physical contact but try to sustain the impression of mental conflict. HARRIET never sees HETTY, never talks to her but rather thinks aloud looking into space. HETTY, however, looks at HARRIET, talks intently and shadows her continually. The same is true of MARGARET and MAGGIE. The voices of the cultured women are affected and lingering, the voices of the primitive impulsive and more or less staccato.

When the curtain rises HARRIET is seated right of tea table, busying herself with the tea things.

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HETTY. Harriet. [*there is no answer.*] Harriet, my other self. [*there is no answer.*] My trained self.

HARRIET. [*listens intently.*] Yes?

[*From behind HARRIET'S chair HETTY rises slowly.*]

HETTY. I want to talk to you.

HARRIET. Well?

HETTY. [*looking at HARRIET admiringly.*] Oh, Harriet, you are beautiful today.

HARRIET. Am I presentable, Hetty?

HETTY. Suits me.

HARRIET. I've tried to make the best of the good points.

HETTY. My passions are deeper than yours. I can't keep on the mask as you do. I'm crude and real; you are my appearance in the world.

HARRIET. I am what you wish the world to believe you are.

HETTY. You are the part of me that has been trained.

HARRIET. I am your educated self.

HETTY. I am the rushing river; you are the ice over the current.

HARRIET. I am your subtle overtones.

HETTY. But together we are one woman, the wife of Charles Goodrich.

HARRIET. There I disagree with you, Hetty, I alone am his wife.

HETTY. [*indignantly.*] Harriet, how can you say such a thing!

HARRIET. Certainly, I am the one who flatters him. I have to be the one who talks to him. If I gave you a chance you would tell him at once that you dislike him.

HETTY. [*moving away.*] I don't love him, that's certain.

HARRIET. You leave all the fibbing to me. He doesn't suspect that my calm, suave manner hides your hatred.

Considering the amount of scheming it causes me, it can safely be said that he is my husband.

HETTY. Oh, if you love him—

HARRIET. I? I haven't any feelings. It isn't my business to love anybody.

HETTY. Then why need you object to calling him my husband?

HARRIET. I resent your appropriation of a man who is managed only through the cleverness of my artifice.

HETTY. You may be clever enough to deceive him, Harriet, but I am still the one who suffers. I can't forget he is my husband. I can't forget that I might have married John Caldwell.

HARRIET. How foolish of you to remember John, just because we met his wife by chance!

HETTY. That's what I want to talk to you about. She may be here at any moment. I want to advise you about what to say to her this afternoon.

HARRIET. By all means tell me now and don't interrupt while she is here. You have a most annoying habit of talking to me when people are present. Sometimes it is all I can do to keep my poise and appear *not* to be listening to you.

HETTY. Impress her.

HARRIET. Hetty, dear, is it not my custom to impress people?

HETTY. I hate her.

HARRIET. I can't let her see that.

HETTY. I hate her because she married John.

HARRIET. Only after you had refused him.

HETTY. [*turning to HARRIET.*] Was it my fault that I refused him?

HARRIET. That's right, blame me.

HETTY. It was your fault. You told me he was too poor and never would be able to do anything in painting. Look at him now, known in Europe, just returned from eight years in Paris, famous.

HARRIET. It was too poor a gamble at the time. It was much safer to accept Charles's money and position.

HETTY. And then John married Margaret within the year.

HARRIET. Out of spite.

HETTY. Freckled, gawky-looking thing she was, too.

HARRIET. [*a little sadly.*] Europe improved her. She was stunning the other morning.

HETTY. Make her jealous today.

HARRIET. Shall I be haughty or caustic or—

HETTY. Above all else you must let her know that we are rich.

HARRIET. Oh, yes, I do that quite easily now.

HETTY. You must put it on a bit.

HARRIET. Never fear.

HETTY. Tell her I love my husband.

HARRIET. My husband—

HETTY. Are you going to quarrel with me?

HARRIET. [*moves away.*] No, I have no desire to quarrel with you. It is quite too uncomfortable. I couldn't get away from you if I tried.

HETTY. [*stamping her foot and following HARRIET.*] You were a stupid fool to make me refuse John; I'll never forgive you—never—

HARRIET. [*stopping and holding up her hand.*] Don't get me all excited. I'll be in no condition to meet her properly this afternoon.

HETTY. [*passionately.*] I could choke you for robbing me of John.

HARRIET. [*retreating.*] Don't muss me!

HETTY. You don't know how you have made me suffer.

HARRIET. [*beginning to feel the strength of HETTY's emotion surge through her and trying to conquer it.*] It is not my business to have heart-aches.

HETTY. You're bloodless. Nothing but sham—sham—while I—

HARRIET. [*emotionally.*] Be quiet; I can't let her see that I have been fighting with my inner self.

HETTY. And now after all my suffering you say it has cost you more than it has cost me to be married to Charles. But it's the pain here in my heart—I've paid the price—I've paid—Charles is not your husband!

HARRIET. [*trying to conquer emotion.*] He is.

HETTY. [*follows HARRIET.*] He isn't.

HARRIET. [*weakly.*] He is.

HETTY. [*towering over HARRIET.*] He isn't! I'll kill you!

HARRIET. [*overpowered, sinks into a chair.*] Don't—don't—you're stronger than I—you're—

HETTY. Say he's mine.

HARRIET. He's ours.

HETTY. [*the telephone rings.*] There she is now.

[*HETTY hurries to 'phone but HARRIET regains her supremacy.*]

HARRIET. [*authoritatively.*] Wait! I can't let the telephone girl down there hear my real self. It isn't proper. [*at 'phone.*] Show Mrs. Caldwell up.

HETTY. I'm so excited, my heart's in my mouth.

HARRIET. [*at the mirror.*] A nice state you've put my nerves into.

HETTY. Don't let her see you're nervous.

HARRIET.¹ Quick, put the veil on, or she'll see you shining through me.

[*HARRIET takes a scarf of chiffon that has been lying over the back of a chair and drapes it on HETTY, covering her face. The chiffon is the same color as their gowns but paler in shade so that it pales HETTY's darker gown to match HARRIET's lighter one. As HETTY moves in the following scene, the chiffon falls away revealing now and then the gown of deeper dye underneath.*]

HETTY. Tell her Charles is rich and fascinating—boast of our friends, make her feel she needs us.

HARRIET. I'll make her ask John to paint us.

HETTY. That's just my thought—if John paints our portrait—

HARRIET. We can wear an exquisite gown—

HETTY. And make him fall in love again and—

HARRIET. [*schemingly.*] Yes.

[*MARGARET parts the portières back centre and extends her hand. MARGARET is followed by her counterpart MAGGIE.*]

Oh, Margaret, I'm so glad to see you!

HETTY. [*to MAGGIE.*] That's a lie.

MARGARET. [*in superficial voice throughout.*] It's enchanting to see you, Harriet.

MAGGIE. [*in emotional voice throughout.*] I'd bite you, if I dared.

HARRIET. [*to MARGARET.*] Wasn't our meeting a stroke of luck?

MARGARET. [*coming down left of table.*] I've thought of you so often, Harriet; and to come back and find you living in New York.

HARRIET. [*coming down right of table.*] Mr. Goodrich has many interests here.

MAGGIE. [*to MARGARET.*] Flatter her.

MARGARET. I know, Mr. Goodrich is so successful.

HETTY. [*to HARRIET.*] Tell her we're rich.

HARRIET. [*to MARGARET.*] Won't you sit down?

MARGARET. [*takes a chair.*] What a beautiful cabinet!²

HARRIET. Do you like it? I'm afraid Charles paid an extravagant price.

MAGGIE. [*to HETTY.*] I don't believe it.

MARGARET. [*sitting down; to HARRIET.*] I am sure he must have.

HARRIET. [*sitting down.*] How well you are looking, Margaret!

HETTY. Yes, you are not. There are circles under your eyes.

MAGGIE. [*to HETTY.*] I haven't eaten since breakfast and I'm hungry.

MARGARET. [*to HARRIET.*] How well you are looking too!

MAGGIE. [*to HETTY.*] You have hard lines about your lips; are you happy?

HETTY. [*to HARRIET.*] Don't let her know that I'm unhappy.

HARRIET. [*to MARGARET.*] Why shouldn't I look well? My life is full, happy, complete—

¹The vaudeville production did not use Harriet's line about the veil because at the rise of the curtain Hetty is already veiled in chiffon the same dark green shade as her gown.

²What beautiful lamps! (In vaudeville production.)

MAGGIE. I wonder.

HETTY. [*in HARRIET's ear.*] Tell her we have an automobile.

MARGARET. [*to HARRIET.*] My life is complete, too.

MAGGIE. My heart is torn with sorrow; my husband cannot make a living. He will kill himself if he does not get an order for a painting.

MARGARET. [*laughs.*] You must come and see us in our studio. John has been doing some excellent portraits. He cannot begin to fill his orders.

HETTY. [*to HARRIET.*] Tell her we have an automobile.

HARRIET. [*to MARGARET.*] Do you take lemon in your tea?

MAGGIE. Take cream. It's more filling.

MARGARET. [*looking nonchalantly at tea things.*] No, cream, if you please. How cozy!

MAGGIE. [*glaring at tea things.*] Only cakes! I could eat them all!

HARRIET. [*to MARGARET.*] How many lumps?

MAGGIE. [*to MARGARET.*] Sugar is nourishing.

MARGARET. [*to HARRIET.*] Three, please. I used to drink very sweet coffee in Turkey and ever since I've—

HETTY. I don't believe you were ever in Turkey.

MAGGIE. I wasn't, but it is none of your business.

HARRIET. [*pouring tea.*] Have you been in Turkey? Do tell me about it.

MAGGIE. [*to MARGARET.*] Change the subject.

MARGARET. [*to HARRIET.*] You must go there. You have so much taste in dress you would enjoy seeing their costumes.

MAGGIE. Isn't she going to pass the cake?

MARGARET. [*to HARRIET.*] John painted several portraits there.

HETTY. [*to HARRIET.*] Why don't you stop her bragging and tell her we have an automobile?

HARRIET. [*offers cake across the table to MARGARET.*] Cake?

MAGGIE. [*stands back of MARGARET, shadowing her as HETTY shadows HARRIET;*

MAGGIE reaches claws out for the cake and groans with joy.] At last!

[*But her claws do not touch the cake.*]

MARGARET. [*with a graceful, nonchalant hand places cake upon her plate and bites at it slowly and delicately.*] Thank you.

HETTY. [*to HARRIET.*] Automobile!

MAGGIE. [*to MARGARET.*] Follow up the costumes with the suggestion that she would make a good model for John. It isn't too early to begin getting what you came for.

MARGARET. [*ignoring MAGGIE.*] What delicious cake!

HETTY. [*excitedly to HARRIET.*] There's your chance for the auto.

HARRIET. [*nonchalantly to MARGARET.*] Yes, it's good cake, isn't it? There are always a great many people buying it at Harper's. I sat in my automobile fifteen minutes this morning waiting for my chauffeur to get it.

MAGGIE. [*to MARGARET.*] Make her order a portrait.

MARGARET. [*to HARRIET.*] If you stopped at Harper's, you must have noticed the new gowns at Henderson's. Aren't the shop windows alluring these days?

HARRIET. Even my chauffeur notices them.

MAGGIE. I know you have an automobile; I heard you the first time.

MARGARET. I notice gowns now with an artist's eye as John does. The one you have on, my dear, is very paintable.

HETTY. Don't let her see you're anxious to be painted.

HARRIET. [*nonchalantly.*] Oh, it's just a little model.

MAGGIE. [*to MARGARET.*] Don't seem anxious to get the order.

MARGARET. [*nonchalantly.*] Perhaps it isn't the gown itself but the way you wear it that pleases the eye. Some people can wear anything with grace.

HETTY. Yes, I'm very graceful.

HARRIET. [*to MARGARET.*] You flatter me, my dear.

MARGARET. On the contrary, Harriet, I have an intense admiration for

you. I remember how beautiful you were—as a girl. In fact, I was quite jealous when John was paying you so much attention.

HETTY. She is gloating because I lost him.

HARRIET. Those were childhood days in a country town.

MAGGIE. [*to MARGARET.*] She's trying to make you feel that John was only a country boy.

MARGARET. Most great men have come from the country. There is a fair chance that John will be added to the list.

HETTY. I know it and I am bitterly jealous of you.

HARRIET. Undoubtedly he owes much of his success to you, Margaret, your experience in economy and your ability to endure hardship. Those first few years in Paris must have been a struggle.

MAGGIE. She is sneering at your poverty.

MARGARET. Yes, we did find life difficult at first, not the luxurious start a girl has who marries wealth.

HETTY. [*to HARRIET.*] Deny that you married Charles for his money.

[HARRIET *deems it wise to ignore HETTY's advice.*]

MARGARET. But John and I are so congenial in our tastes that we were impervious to hardship or unhappiness.

HETTY. [*in anguish.*] Do you still love each other? Is it really true?

HARRIET. [*sweetly.*] Did you have all the romance of starving for his art?

MAGGIE. [*to MARGARET.*] She's taunting you. Get even with her.

MARGARET. Not for long. Prince Rier soon discovered John's genius and introduced him royally to wealthy Parisians who gave him many orders.

HETTY. [*to MAGGIE.*] Are you telling the truth or are you lying?

HARRIET. If he had so many opportunities there, you must have had great inducements to come back to the States.

MAGGIE. [*to HETTY.*] We did, but not the kind you think.

MARGARET. John became the rage

among Americans traveling in France, too, and they simply insisted upon his coming here.

HARRIET. Whom is he going to paint here?

MAGGIE. [*frightened.*] What names dare I make up?

MARGARET. [*calmly.*] Just at present Miss Dorothy Ainsworth of Oregon is posing. You may not know the name, but she is the daughter of a wealthy miner who found gold in Alaska.

HARRIET. I dare say there are many Western people we have never heard of.

MARGARET. You must have found social life in New York very interesting, Harriet, after the simplicity of our home town.

HETTY. [*to MAGGIE.*] There's no need to remind us that our beginnings were the same.

HARRIET. Of course Charles's family made everything delightful for me. They are so well connected.

MAGGIE. [*to MARGARET.*] Flatter her.

MARGARET. I heard it mentioned yesterday that you had made yourself very popular. Some one said you were very clever!

HARRIET. [*pleased.*] Who told you that?

MAGGIE. Nobody!

MARGARET. [*pleasantly.*] Oh, confidences should be suspected—respected, I mean. They said, too, that you are gaining some reputation as a critic of art.

HARRIET. I make no pretenses.

MARGARET. Are you and Mr. Goodrich interested in the same things, too?

HETTY. No!

HARRIET. Yes, indeed, Charles and I are inseparable.

MAGGIE. I wonder.

HARRIET. Do have another cake.

MAGGIE. [*in relief.*] Oh, yes.

[*Again her claws extend but do not touch the cake.*]

MARGARET. [*takes cake delicately.*] I really shouldn't—after my big luncheon. John took me to the Ritz and we are invited to the Bedford's for dinner—they have such a magnifi-

cent house near the drive—I really shouldn't, but the cakes are so good.

MAGGIE. Starving!

HARRIET. [*to MARGARET.*] More tea?

MAGGIE. Yes!

MARGARET. No, thank you. How wonderfully life has arranged itself for you! Wealth, position, a happy marriage, every opportunity to enjoy all pleasures; beauty, art—how happy you must be!

HETTY. [*in anguish.*] Don't call me happy. I've never been happy since I gave up John. All these years without him—a future without him—no—no—I shall win him back—away from you—away from you—

HARRIET. [*does not see MAGGIE pointing to cream and MARGARET stealing some.*] I sometimes think it is unfair for any one to be as happy as I am. Charles and I are just as much in love now as when we married. To me he is just the dearest man in the world.

MAGGIE. [*passionately.*] My John is. I love him so much I could die for him. I'm going through hunger and want to make him great and he loves me. He worships me!

MARGARET. [*leisurely to HARRIET.*] I should like to meet Mr. Goodrich. Bring him to our studio. John has some sketches to show. Not many, because all the portraits have been purchased by the subjects. He gets as much as four thousand dollars now.

HETTY. [*to HARRIET.*] Don't pay that much.

HARRIET. [*to MARGARET.*] As much as that?

MARGARET. It is not really too much when one considers that John is in the foremost rank of artists today. A picture painted by him now will double and treble in value.

MAGGIE. It's a lie. He is growing weak with despair.

HARRIET. Does he paint all day long?

MAGGIE. No, he draws advertisements for our bread.

MARGARET. [*to HARRIET.*] When you and your husband come to see us, telephone first—

MAGGIE. Yes, so he can get the advertisements out of the way.

MARGARET. Otherwise you might arrive while he has a sitter, and John refuses to let me disturb him then.

HETTY. Make her ask for an order.

HARRIET. [*to MARGARET.*] Le Grange offered to paint me for a thousand.

MARGARET. Louis Le Grange's reputation isn't worth more than that.

HARRIET. Well, I've heard his work well mentioned.

MAGGIE. Yes, he is doing splendid work.

MARGARET. Oh, dear me, no. He is only praised by the masses. He is accepted not at all by artists themselves.

HETTY. [*anxiously.*] Must I really pay the full price?

HARRIET. Le Grange thought I would make a good subject.

MAGGIE. [*to MARGARET.*] Let her fish for it.

MARGARET. Of course you would. Why don't you let Le Grange paint you, if you *trust* him?

HETTY. She doesn't seem anxious to have John do it.

HARRIET. But if Le Grange isn't accepted by artists, it would be a waste of time to pose for him, wouldn't it?

MARGARET. Yes, I think it would.

MAGGIE. [*passionately to HETTY across back of table.*] Give us the order. John is so despondent he can't endure much longer. Help us! Help me! Save us!

HETTY. [*to HARRIET.*] Don't seem too eager.

HARRIET. And yet if he charges only a thousand, one might consider it.

MARGARET. If you really wish to be painted, why don't you give a little more and have a portrait really worth while? John might be induced to do you for a little below his usual price considering that you used to be such good friends.

HETTY. [*in glee.*] Hurrah!

HARRIET. [*quietly to MARGARET.*] That's very nice of you to suggest—of course I don't know—

MAGGIE. [*in fear.*] For God's sake, say yes.

MARGARET. [*quietly to HARRIET.*] Of course, I don't know whether John would. He is very peculiar in these matters. He sets his value on his work and thinks it beneath him to discuss price.

HETTY. [*to MAGGIE.*] You needn't try to make us feel small.

MARGARET. Still, I might quite delicately mention to him that inasmuch as you have so many influential friends you would be very glad to—to—

MAGGIE. [*to HETTY.*] Finish what I don't want to say.

HETTY. [*to HARRIET.*] Help her out.

HARRIET. Oh, yes, introductions will follow the exhibition of my portrait. No doubt I—

HETTY. [*to HARRIET.*] Be patronizing.

HARRIET. No doubt I shall be able to introduce your husband to his advantage.

MAGGIE. [*relieved.*] Saved.

MARGARET. If I find John in a propitious mood I shall take pleasure, for your sake, in telling him about your beauty. Just as you are sitting now would be a lovely pose.

MAGGIE. [*to MARGARET.*] We can go now.

HETTY. [*to HARRIET.*] Don't let her think she is doing us a favor.

HARRIET. It will give me pleasure to add my name to your husband's list of patronesses.

MAGGIE. [*excitedly to MARGARET.*] Run home and tell John the good news.

MARGARET. [*leisurely to HARRIET.*] I little guessed when I came for a pleasant chat about old times that it would develop into business arrangements. I had no idea, Harriet, that you had any intention of being painted. By Le Grange, too. Well, I came just in time to rescue you.

MAGGIE. [*to MARGARET.*] Run home and tell John. Hurry, hurry!

HETTY. [*to HARRIET.*] You managed the order very neatly. She doesn't suspect that you wanted it.

HARRIET. Now if I am not satisfied with my portrait, I shall blame you,

Margaret, dear. I am relying upon your opinion of John's talent.

MAGGIE. [*to MARGARET.*] She doesn't suspect what you came for. Run home and tell John!

HARRIET. You always had a brilliant mind, Margaret.

MARGARET. Ah, it is you who flatter, now.

MAGGIE. [*to MARGARET.*] You don't have to stay so long. Hurry home!

HARRIET. Ah, one does not flatter when one tells the truth.

MARGARET. [*smiles.*] I must be going or you will have me completely under your spell.

HETTY. [*looks at clock.*] Yes, do go. I have to dress for dinner.

HARRIET. [*to MARGARET.*] Oh, don't hurry.

MAGGIE. [*to HETTY.*] I hate you!

MARGARET. No, really I must, but I hope we shall see each other often at the studio. I find you so stimulating.

HETTY. [*to MAGGIE.*] I hate you!

HARRIET. [*to MARGARET.*] It is indeed gratifying to find a kindred spirit.

MAGGIE. [*to HETTY.*] I came for your gold.

MARGARET. [*to HARRIET.*] How delightful it is to know you again!

HETTY. [*to MAGGIE.*] I am going to make you and your husband suffer.

HARRIET. My kindest regards to John.

MAGGIE. [*to HETTY.*] He has forgotten all about you.

MARGARET. [*rises.*] He will be so happy to receive them.

HETTY. [*to MAGGIE.*] I can hardly wait to talk to him again.

HARRIET. I shall wait, then, until you send me word?

MARGARET. [*offering her hand.*] I'll speak to John about it as soon as I can and tell you when to come.

[HARRIET takes MARGARET's hand affectionately. HETTY and MAGGIE rush at each other, throw back their veils, and fling their speeches fiercely at each other.]

HETTY. I love him—I love him—

MAGGIE. He's starving—I'm starving—

HETTY. I'm going to take him away from you—

MAGGIE. I want your money—and your influence.

HETTY and MAGGIE. I'm going to rob you—rob you.

[There is a cymbal crash, the lights go out and come up again slowly, leaving only MARGARET and HARRIET visible.]

MARGARET. [*quietly to HARRIET.*] I've had such a delightful afternoon.

HARRIET. [*offering her hand.*] It has been a joy to see you.

MARGARET. [*sweetly to HARRIET.*] It has been a joy to see you.

MARGARET. [*sweetly to HARRIET.*] Good-bye.

HARRIET. [*sweetly to MARGARET as she kisses her.*] Good-bye, my dear.

[*Curtain.*]

TRIFLES *

SUSAN GLASPELL

CHARACTERS

GEORGE HENDERSON.
HENRY PETERS.
LEWIS HALE.

MRS. PETERS.
MRS. HALE.

SCENE—*The kitchen in the now abandoned farm-house of JOHN WRIGHT, a gloomy kitchen, and left without having been put in order—unwashed pans under the sink, a loaf of bread outside the bread-box, a dish-towel on the table—other signs of uncompleted work. At the rear the outer door opens and the SHERIFF comes in followed by the COUNTY ATTORNEY and HALE. The SHERIFF and HALE are men in middle life, the COUNTY ATTORNEY is a young man; all are much bundled up and go at once to the stove. They are followed by the two women—the SHERIFF's wife first; she is a slight wiry woman, a thin nervous face. MRS. HALE is larger and would ordinarily be called more comfortable looking, but she is disturbed now and looks fearfully about as she enters. The women have come in slowly, and stand close together near the door.*

COUNTY ATTORNEY. [*rubbing his hands.*] This feels good. Come up to the fire, ladies.

MRS. PETERS. [*after taking a step forward.*] I'm not—cold.

SHERIFF. [*unbuttoning his overcoat and stepping away from the stove as if to mark the beginning of official business.*] Now, Mrs. Hale, before we move

things about, you explain to Mr. Henderson just what you saw when you came here yesterday morning.

COUNTY ATTORNEY. By the way, has anything been moved? Are things just as you left them yesterday?

SHERIFF. [*looking about.*] It's just the same. When it dropped below zero last night I thought I'd better send Frank out this morning to make a fire for us—no use getting pneumonia with a big case on, but I told him not to touch anything except the stove—and you know Frank.

COUNTY ATTORNEY. Somebody should have been left here yesterday.

SHERIFF. Oh—yesterday. When I had to send Frank to Morris Center for that man who went crazy—I want you to know I had my hands full yesterday. I knew you could get back from Omaha by today and as long as I went over everything here myself—

COUNTY ATTORNEY. Well, Mr. Hale, tell just what happened when you came here yesterday morning.

HALE. Harry and I had started to town with a load of potatoes. We came along the road from my place and as I got here I said, "I'm going to see if I can't get John Wright to go in with me on a party telephone." I spoke to Wright about it once before and he put me off, saying folks talked too much anyway, and all he asked was peace and quiet—I guess you know about how much he talked himself; but I thought maybe if I went to the house and talked about it before his wife, though I said to Harry that I didn't know as what his wife wanted made much difference to John—

COUNTY ATTORNEY. Let's talk about that later, Mr. Hale. I do want to

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talk about that, but tell now just what happened when you got to the house.

HALE. I didn't hear or see anything; I knocked at the door, and still it was all quiet inside. I knew they must be up, it was past eight o'clock. So I knocked again, and I thought I heard somebody say "Come in." I wasn't sure, I'm not sure yet, but I opened the door—this door [*indicating the door by which the two women are still standing*] and there in that rocker—[*pointing to it*] sat Mrs. Wright.

[*They all look at the rocker.*]

COUNTY ATTORNEY. What—was she doing?

HALE. She was rockin' back and forth. She had her apron in her hand and was kind of—pleating it.

COUNTY ATTORNEY. And how did she—look?

HALE. Well, she looked queer.

COUNTY ATTORNEY. How do you mean—queer?

HALE. Well, as if she didn't know what she was going to do next. And kind of done up.

COUNTY ATTORNEY. How did she seem to feel about your coming?

HALE. Why, I don't think she minded—one way or other. She didn't pay much attention. I said, "How do, Mrs. Wright, it's cold, ain't it?" And she said, "Is it?"—and went on kind of pleating at her apron. Well, I was surprised; she didn't ask me to come up to the stove, or to set down, but just sat there, not even looking at me, so I said, "I want to see John." And then she—laughed. I guess you would call it a laugh. I thought of Harry and the team outside, so I said a little sharp: "Can't I see John?" "No," she says, kind o' dull like. "Ain't he home?" says I. "Yes," says she, "he's home." "Then why can't I see him?" I asked her, out of patience. "'Cause he's dead," says she. "Dead?" says I. She just nodded her head, not getting a bit excited, but rockin' back and forth. "Why—where is he?" says I, not knowing what to say. She just pointed upstairs—like that. [*himself pointing to the room above.*] I got up,

with the idea of going up there. I walked from there to here—then I says, "Why, what did he die of?" "He died of a rope round his neck," says she, and just went on pleatin' at her apron. Well, I went out and called Harry. I thought I might—need help. We went upstairs and there he was lyin'—

COUNTY ATTORNEY. I think I'd rather have you go into that upstairs, where you can point it all out. Just go on now with the rest of the story.

HALE. Well, my first thought was to get that rope off. It looked . . . [*stops, his face twitches*] . . . but Harry, he went up to him, and he said, "No, he's dead all right, and we'd better not touch anything." So we went back downstairs. She was still sitting that same way. "Has anybody been notified?" I asked. "No," says she, unconcerned. "Who did this, Mrs. Wright?" said Harry. He said it business-like—and she stopped pleatin' her apron. "I don't know," she says. "You don't know?" says Harry. "No," says she. "Weren't you sleepin' in the bed with him?" says Harry. "Yes," says she, "but I was on the inside." "Somebody slipped a rope round his neck and strangled him and you didn't wake up?" says Harry. "I didn't wake up," she said after him. We must 'a' looked as if we didn't see how that could be, for after a minute she said, "I sleep sound." Harry was going to ask her more questions, but I said maybe we ought to let her tell her story first to the coroner, or the sheriff, so Harry went as fast as he could to Rivers' place, where there's a telephone.

COUNTY ATTORNEY. And what did Mrs. Wright do when she knew that you had gone for the coroner?

HALE. She moved from that chair to this over here . . . [*pointing to a small chair in the corner*] . . . and just sat there with her hands held together, and looking down. I got a feeling that I ought to make some conversation, so I said I had come in to see if John wanted to put in a telephone, and at that she started to laugh, and then she stopped and looked at

me—scared. [*the COUNTY ATTORNEY, who has had his notebook out, makes a note.*] I dunno, maybe it wasn't scared. I wouldn't like to say it was. Soon Harry got back, and then Dr. Lloyd came, and you, Mr. Peters, and so I guess that's all I know that you don't.

COUNTY ATTORNEY. [*looking around.*] I guess we'll go upstairs first—and then out to the barn and around there. [*to the SHERIFF.*] You're convinced that there was nothing important here—nothing that would point to any motive?

SHERIFF. Nothing here but kitchen things.

[*The COUNTY ATTORNEY, after again looking around the kitchen, opens the door of a cupboard closet. He gets up on a chair and looks on a shelf. Pulls his hand away, sticky.*]

COUNTY ATTORNEY. Here's a nice mess. [*The women draw nearer.*]

MRS. PETERS. [*to the other woman.*] Oh, her fruit; it did freeze. [*to the LAWYER.*] She worried about that when it turned so cold. She said the fire'd go out and her jars would break.

SHERIFF. Well, can you beat the women! Held for murder and worry-in' about her preserves.

COUNTY ATTORNEY. I guess before we're through she may have something more serious than preserves to worry about.

HALE. Well, women are used to worrying over trifles.

[*The two women move a little closer together.*]

COUNTY ATTORNEY. [*with the gallantry of a young politician.*] And yet, for all their worries, what would we do without the ladies? [*the women do not unbend; he goes to the sink, takes a dipperful of water from the pail and pouring it into a basin, washes his hands; starts to wipe them on the roller-towel, turns it for a cleaner place.*] Dirty towels! [*kicks his foot against the pans under the sink.*] Not much of a housekeeper, would you say, ladies?

MRS. HALE. [*stiffly.*] There's a great deal of work to be done on a farm.

COUNTY ATTORNEY. To be sure. And yet . . . [*with a little bow to her*] . . . I know there are some Dickson county farmhouses which do not have such roller towels.

[*He gives it a pull to expose its full length again.*]

MRS. HALE. Those towels get dirty awful quick. Men's hands aren't always as clean as they might be.

COUNTY ATTORNEY. Ah, loyal to your sex, I see. But you and Mrs. Wright were neighbors. I suppose you were friends, too.

MRS. HALE. [*shaking her head.*] I've not seen much of her of late years. I've not been in this house—it's more than a year.

COUNTY ATTORNEY. And why was that? You didn't like her?

MRS. HALE. I liked her all well enough. Farmers' wives have their hands full, Mr. Henderson. And then—

COUNTY ATTORNEY. Yes—?

MRS. HALE. [*looking about.*] It never seemed a very cheerful place.

COUNTY ATTORNEY. No—it's not cheerful. I shouldn't say she had the homemaking instinct.

MRS. HALE. Well, I don't know as Wright had, either.

COUNTY ATTORNEY. You mean that they didn't get on very well?

MRS. HALE. No, I don't mean anything. But I don't think a place'd be any more cheerful for John Wright's being in it.

COUNTY ATTORNEY. I'd like to talk more of that a little later. I want to get the lay of things upstairs now.

[*He goes to the left, where three steps lead to a stair door.*]

SHERIFF. I suppose anything Mrs. Peters does'll be all right. She was to take in some clothes for her, you know, and a few little things. We left in such a hurry yesterday.

COUNTY ATTORNEY. Yes, but I would like to see what you take, Mrs. Peters, and keep an eye out for anything that might be of use to us.

MRS. PETERS. Yes, Mr. Henderson.

MRS. HALE. I'd hate to have men coming into my kitchen, snooping around and criticizing.

[She arranges the pans under the sink which the LAWYER had shoved out of place.]

MRS. PETERS. Of course it's no more than their duty.

MRS. HALE. Duty's all right, but I guess that deputy sheriff that came out to make the fire might have got a little of this on. *[gives the roller towel a pull.]* Wish I'd thought of that sooner. Seems mean to talk about her for not having things slicked up when she had to come away in such a hurry.

MRS. PETERS. *[who has gone to a small table in the left rear corner of the room, and lifted one end of a towel that covers a pan.]* She had bread set.

[Stands still.]

MRS. HALE. *[eyes fixed on a loaf of bread beside the bread-box, which is on a low shelf at the other side of the room, moves slowly toward it.]* She was going to put this in there. *[picks up loaf, then abruptly drops it; in a manner of returning to familiar things.]* It's a shame about her fruit. I wonder if it's all gone. *[gets up on the chair and looks.]* I think there's some here that's all right, Mrs. Peters. Yes—here; *[holding it toward the window]* this is cherries, too. *[looking again.]* I declare I believe that's the only one. *[gets down, bottle in her hand; goes to the sink and wipes it off on the outside.]* She'll feel awful bad after all her hard work in the hot weather. I remember the afternoon I put up my cherries last summer.

[She puts the bottle on the big kitchen table, center of the room, front table. With a sigh, is about to sit down in the rocking-chair. Before she is seated realizes what chair it is; with a slow look at it, steps back. The chair which she has touched rocks back and forth.]

MRS. PETERS. Well, I must get those things from the front room closet. *[she goes to the door at the right, but after*

looking into the other room, steps back.] You coming with me, Mrs. Hale? You could help me carry them.

[They go in the other room; reappear, MRS. PETERS carrying a dress and skirt, Mrs. HALE following with a pair of shoes.] . . .

MRS. PETERS. My, it's cold in there!

[She puts the cloth on the big table, and hurries to the stove.]

MRS. HALE. *[examining the skirt.]* Wright was close. I think maybe that's why she kept so much to herself. She didn't even belong to the Ladies' Aid. I suppose she felt she couldn't do her part, and then you don't enjoy things when you feel shabby. She used to wear pretty clothes and be lively, when she was Minnie Foster, one of the town girls singing in the choir. But that—oh, that was thirty years ago. This all you was to take in?

MRS. PETERS. She said she wanted an apron. Funny thing to want, for there isn't much to get dirty in jail, goodness knows. But I suppose just to make her feel more natural. She said they was in the top drawer in this cupboard. Yes, here. And then her little shawl that always hung behind the door. *[opens stair door and looks.]* Yes, here it is.

[Quickly shuts door leading upstairs.]

MRS. HALE. *[abruptly moving toward her.]* Mrs. Peters?

MRS. PETERS. Yes, Mrs. Hale?

MRS. HALE. Do you think she did it?

MRS. PETERS. *[in a frightened voice.]* Oh, I don't know.

MRS. HALE. Well, I don't think she did. Asking for an apron and her little shawl. Worrying about her fruit.

MRS. PETERS. *[starts to speak, glances up, where footsteps are heard in the room above; in a low voice.]*

Mr. Peters says it looks bad for her. Mr. Henderson is awful sarcastic in a speech and he'll make fun of her sayin' she didn't wake up.

MRS. HALE. Well, I guess John Wright didn't wake when they was slipping that rope under his neck.

MRS. PETERS. No, it's strange. It must have been done awful crafty and still. They say it was such a—funny way to kill a man, rigging it all up like that.

MRS. HALE. That's just what Mr. Hale said. There was a gun in the house. He says that's what he can't understand.

MRS. PETERS. Mr. Henderson said coming out that what was needed for the case was a motive; something to show anger, or—sudden feeling.

MRS. HALE. [*who is standing by the table.*] Well, I don't see any signs of anger around here. [*she puts her hand on the dish towel which lies on the table, stands looking down at the table, one half of which is clean, the other half messy.*] It's wiped here. [*makes a move as if to finish work, then turns and looks at loaf of bread outside the bread-box; drops towel; in that voice of coming back to familiar things.*] Wonder how they are finding things upstairs? I hope she had it a little more red-up up there. You know, it seems kind of *sneaking*. Locking her up in town and then coming out here and trying to get her own house to turn against her!

MRS. PETERS. But, Mrs. Hale, the law is the law.

MRS. HALE. I s'pose 'tis. [*unbuttoning her coat.*] Better loosen up your things, Mrs. Peters. You won't feel them when you go out.

[*MRS. PETERS takes off her fur tippet, goes to hang it on hook at back of room, stands looking at the under part of the small corner table.*]

MRS. PETERS. She was piecing a quilt.

[*She brings the large sewing basket and they look at the bright pieces.*]

MRS. HALE. It's a log cabin pattern. Pretty, isn't it? I wonder if she was goin' to quilt it or just knot it.

[*Footsteps have been heard coming down the stairs. The SHERIFF enters, followed by HALE and the COUNTY ATTORNEY.*]

SHERIFF. They wonder if she was going to quilt it or just knot it.

[*The men laugh, the women look abashed.*]

COUNTY ATTORNEY. [*rubbing his hands over the stove.*] Frank's fire didn't do much up there, did it? Well, let's go out to the barn and get that cleared up. [*The men go outside.*]

MRS. HALE. [*resentfully.*] I don't know as there's anything so strange, our takin' up our time with little things while we're waiting for them to get the evidence. [*she sits down at the table smoothing out a block with decision.*] I don't see as it's anything to laugh about.

MRS. PETERS. [*apologetically.*] Of course they've got awful important things on their minds.

[*Pulls up a chair and joins MRS. HALE at the table.*]

MRS. HALE. [*examining another block.*] Mrs. Peters, look at this one. Here, this is the one she was working on, and look at the sewing! All the rest of it has been so nice and even. And look at this! It's all over the place! Why, it looks as if she didn't know what she was about!

[*After she has said this they look at each other, then start to glance back at the door. After an instant MRS. HALE has pulled at a knot and ripped the sewing.*]

MRS. PETERS. Oh, what are you doing, Mrs. Hale?

MRS. HALE. [*mildly.*] Just pulling out a stitch or two that's not sewed very good. [*threading a needle.*] Bad sewing always made me fidgety.

MRS. PETERS. [*nervously.*] I don't think we ought to touch things.

MRS. HALE. I'll just finish up this end. [*suddenly stopping and leaning forward.*] Mrs. Peters?

MRS. PETERS. Yes, Mrs. Hale?

MRS. HALE. What do you suppose she was so nervous about?

MRS. PETERS. Oh—I don't know. I don't know as she was nervous. I sometimes sew awful queer when I'm just tired. [*MRS. HALE starts to say some-*

thing, looks at MRS. PETERS, then goes on sewing.] Well, I must get these wrapped up. They may be through sooner than we think. [*putting apron and other things together.*] I wonder where I can find a piece of paper, and string.

MRS. HALE. In that cupboard, maybe.

MRS. PETERS. [*looking in cupboard.*] Why, here's a bird-cage. [*holds it up.*] Did she have a bird, Mrs. Hale?

MRS. HALE. Why, I don't know whether she did or not—I've not been here for so long. There was a man around last year selling canaries cheap, but I don't know as she took one; maybe she did. She used to sing real pretty herself.

MRS. PETERS. [*glancing around.*] Seems funny to think of a bird here. But she must have had one, or why should she have a cage? I wonder what happened to it?

MRS. HALE. I s'pose maybe the cat got it.

MRS. PETERS. No, she didn't have a cat. She's got that feeling some people have about cats—being afraid of them. My cat got in her room and she was real upset and asked me to take it out.

MRS. HALE. My sister Bessie was like that. Queer, ain't it?

MRS. PETERS. [*examining the cage.*] Why, look at this door. It's broke. One hinge is pulled apart.

MRS. HALE. [*looking too.*] Looks as if some one must have been rough with it.

MRS. PETERS. Why, yes.

[*She brings the cage forward and puts it on the table.*]

MRS. HALE. I wish if they're going to find any evidence they'd be about it. I don't like this place.

MRS. PETERS. But I'm awful glad you come with me, Mrs. Hale. It would be lonesome for me sitting here alone.

MRS. HALE. It would, wouldn't it? [*dropping her sewing.*] But I tell you what I wish, Mrs. Peters. I wish I had come over sometimes when she

was here. I—[*looking around the room*—wish I had.

MRS. PETERS. But of course you were awful busy, Mrs. Hale—your house and your children.

MRS. HALE. I could've come. I stayed away because it weren't cheerful—and that's why I ought to have come. I—I've never liked this place. Maybe because it's down in a hollow and you don't see the road. I dunno what it is, but it's a lonesome place and always was. I wish I had come over to see Minnie Foster sometimes. I can see now— [*Shakes her head.*]

MRS. PETERS. Well, you mustn't reproach yourself, Mrs. Hale. Somehow we just don't see how it is with other folks until something comes up.

MRS. HALE. Not having children makes less work—but it makes a quiet house, and Wright out to work all day, and no company when he did come in. Did you know John Wright, Mrs. Peters?

MRS. PETERS. Not to know him; I've seen him in town. They say he was a good man.

MRS. HALE. Yes—good; he didn't drink, and kept his word as well as most, I guess, and paid his debts. But he was a hard man, Mrs. Peters. Just to pass the time of day with him. [*shivers.*] Like a raw wind that gets to the bone. [*pauses, her eye falling on the cage.*] I should think she would 'a' wanted a bird. But what do you suppose went with it?

MRS. PETERS. I don't know, unless it got sick and died.

[*She reaches over and swings the broken door, swings it again; both women watch it.*]

MRS. HALE. You weren't raised round here, were you? [*Mrs. Peters shakes her head.*] You didn't know—her?

MRS. PETERS. Not till they brought her yesterday.

MRS. HALE. She—come to think of it, she was kind of like a bird herself—real sweet and pretty, but kind of timid and—fluttery. How—she—did—change! [*silence; then as if struck by*

a happy thought and relieved to get back to everyday things.] Tell you what, Mrs. Peters, why don't you take the quilt in with you? It might take up her mind.

MRS. PETERS. Why, I think that's a real nice idea, Mrs. Hale. There couldn't possibly be any objection to it, could there? Now, just what would I take? I wonder if her patches are in here—and her things.

[*They look in the sewing basket.*]

MRS. HALE. Here's some red. I expect this has got sewing things in it. [*brings out a fancy box.*] What a pretty box! Looks like something somebody would give you. Maybe her scissors are in here. [*opens box; suddenly puts her hand to her nose.*] Why—[*MRS. PETERS bends nearer, then turns her face away.*] There's something wrapped up in this piece of silk.

MRS. PETERS. Why, this isn't her scissors.

MRS. HALE. [*lifting the silk.*] Oh, Mrs. Peters—it's—

[*MRS. PETERS bends closer.*]

MRS. PETERS. It's the bird.

MRS. HALE. [*jumping up.*] But, Mrs. Peters—look at it. Its neck! Look at its neck! It's all—other side to.

MRS. PETERS. Somebody—wrung—its neck.

[*Their eyes meet. A look of growing comprehension of horror. Steps are heard outside.*]

MRS. HALE slips box under quilt pieces, and sinks into her chair. Enter SHERIFF and COUNTY ATTORNEY. MRS. PETERS rises.]

COUNTY ATTORNEY. [*as one turning from serious things to little pleasantries.*] Well, ladies, have you decided whether she was going to quilt it or knot it?

MRS. PETERS. We think she was going to—knot it.

COUNTY ATTORNEY. Well, that's interesting, I'm sure. [*seeing the bird-cage.*] Has the bird flown?

MRS. HALE. [*putting more quilt pieces over the box.*] We think the—cat got it.

COUNTY ATTORNEY. [*preoccupied.*] Is there a cat?

[*MRS. HALE glances in a quick covert way at MRS. PETERS.*]

MRS. PETERS. Well, not now. They're superstitious, you know. They leave.

COUNTY ATTORNEY. [*to SHERIFF PETERS, continuing an interrupted conversation.*] No sign at all of any one having come from the outside. Their own rope. Now let's go up again and go over it piece by piece. [*they start upstairs.*] It would have to have been some one who knew just the—

[*MRS. PETERS sits down. The two women sit there not looking at one another, but as if peering into something and at the same time holding back. When they talk now it is in the manner of feeling their way over strange ground, as if afraid of what they are saying, but as if they cannot help saying it.*]

MRS. HALE. She liked the bird. She was going to bury it in that pretty box.

MRS. PETERS. [*in a whisper.*] When I was a girl—my kitten—there was a boy took a hatchet, and before my eyes—and before I could get there—[*covers her face an instant.*] If they hadn't held me back I would have—[*catches herself, looks upstairs where steps are heard, falters weakly*]—hurt him.

MRS. HALE. [*with a slow look around her.*] I wonder how it would seem never to have had any children around. [*pause.*] No, Wright wouldn't like the bird—a thing that sang. She used to sing. He killed that, too.

MRS. PETERS. [*moving uneasily.*] We don't know who killed the bird.

MRS. HALE. I knew John Wright.

MRS. PETERS. It was an awful thing was done in this house that night, Mrs. Hale. Killing a man while he slept, slipping a rope around his neck that choked the life out of him.

MRS. HALE. His neck. Choked the life out of him.

[*Her hand goes out and rests on the bird-cage.*]

MRS. PETERS. [*with rising voice.*] We don't know who killed him. We don't know.

MRS. HALE. [*her own feeling not interrupted.*] If there'd been years and years of nothing, then a bird to sing to you, it would be awful—still, after the bird was still.

MRS. PETERS. [*something within her speaking.*] I know what stillness is. When we homesteaded in Dakota, and my first baby died—after he was two years old, and me with no other then—

MRS. HALE. [*moving.*] How soon do you suppose they'll be through, looking for evidence?

MRS. PETERS. I know what stillness is. [*pulling herself back.*] The law has got to punish crime, Mrs. Hale.

MRS. HALE. [*not as if answering that.*] I wish you'd seen Minnie Foster when she wore a white dress with blue ribbons and stood up there in the choir and sang. [*a look around the room.*] Oh, I wish I'd come over here once in a while? That was a crime! That was a crime! Who's going to punish that?

MRS. PETERS. [*looking upstairs.*] We mustn't—take on.

MRS. HALE. I might have known she needed help! I know how things can be—for women. I tell you it's queer, Mrs. Peters. We live close together and we live far apart. We all go through the same things—it's all just a different kind of the same thing. [*brushes her eyes, noticing the bottle of fruit, reaches out for it.*] If I was you I wouldn't tell her her fruit was gone. Tell her it ain't. Tell her it's all right. Take this in to prove it to her. She—she may never know whether it was broke or not.

MRS. PETERS. [*takes the bottle, looks about for something to wrap it in; takes petticoat from the clothes brought from the other room, very nervously begins winding this around the bottle; in a false voice.*] My, it's a good thing the men couldn't hear us. Wouldn't they just laugh! Getting all stirred up over a little thing like a—dead canary. As if that could have anything to do with —with—wouldn't they laugh!

[*The men are heard coming down stairs.*]

MRS. HALE. [*under her breath.*] Maybe they would—maybe they wouldn't.

COUNTY ATTORNEY. No, Peters, it's all perfectly clear except a reason for doing it. But you know juries when it comes to women. If there was some definite thing! Something to show—something to make a story about—a thing that would connect with this strange way of doing it.

[*The women's eyes meet for an instant. Enter HALE from outer door.*]

HALE. Well, I've got the team around. Pretty cold out there.

COUNTY ATTORNEY. I'm going to stay here a while by myself. [*to the SHERIFF.*] You can send Frank out for me, can't you? I want to go over everything. I'm not satisfied that we can't do better.

SHERIFF. Do you want to see what Mrs. Peters is going to take in?

[*The LAWYER goes to the table, picks up the apron, laughs.*]

COUNTY ATTORNEY. Oh, I guess they're not very dangerous things the ladies have picked out. [*moves a few things about, disturbing the quilt pieces which cover the box; steps back.*] No, Mrs. Peters doesn't need supervising. For that matter a sheriff's wife is married to the law. Ever think of it that way, Mrs. Peters?

MRS. PETERS. Not—just that way.

SHERIFF. [*chuckling.*] Married to the law. [*moves toward the other room.*] I just want you to come in here a minute, George. We ought to take a look at these windows.

COUNTY ATTORNEY. [*scoffingly.*] Oh, windows!

SHERIFF. We'll be right out, Mr. Hale.

[*HALE goes outside. The SHERIFF follows the COUNTY ATTORNEY into the other room. Then MRS. HALE rises, hands tight together, looking intensely at MRS. PETERS, whose eyes make a slow turn, finally*

meeting MRS. HALE'S. A moment MRS. HALE holds her, then her own eyes point the way to where the box is concealed. Suddenly MRS. PETERS throws back quilt pieces and tries to put the box in the bag she is wearing. It is too big. She opens box, starts to take bird out, cannot touch it, goes to pieces, stands there helpless. Sound of a knob turning in the other room. MRS.

HALE snatches the box and puts it in the pocket of her big coat. Enter COUNTY ATTORNEY and SHERIFF.]

COUNTY ATTORNEY. [*facetiously.*] Well, Henry, at least we found out that she was not going to quilt it. She was going to—what is it you call it, ladies?

MRS. HALE. [*her hand against her pocket.*] We call it—knot it, Mr. Henderson.

[*Curtain.*]

PEGGY *

A TRAGEDY OF THE TENANT FARMER

HAROLD WILLIAMSON

CHARACTERS

WILL WARREN, *a tenant farmer.*
MAG WARREN, *his wife.*
PEGGY, *their daughter, aged 18.*
HERMAN, *their son, aged 6*
JED, *a farm hand, in love with PEGGY.*
JOHN McDONALD, *the landowner.*
WESLEY McDONALD, *his son, a University student.*

SCENE—A tenant farm in North Carolina.
The bare living-room of a two-room cabin.

TIME—The present. An April evening, about seven o'clock.

The scene is laid in one of the two rooms of a tenant shack. In the centre of the room is a square eating-table with an oil-cloth cover. On each side of the table is a straw-bottom chair. A small, worn cook-stove is in the left corner and beside it a wood-box. At the right of the stove is a rectangular table on which are a dishpan and other cooking utensils. Against the back wall is a cupboard which holds the

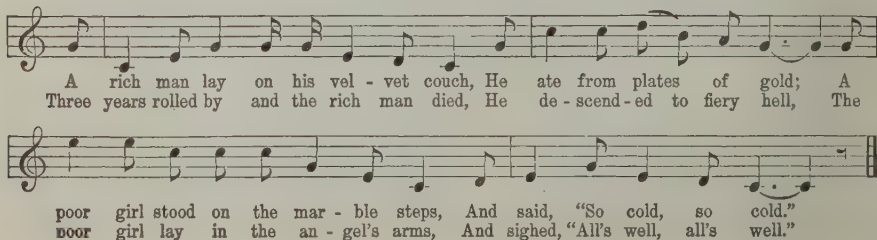
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meagre supply of tableware. On top of it are several paper sacks and paste-board boxes containing cooking materials. A door in the right side leads from the eating-room into the only other room of the shack, used as a sleeping-room. A door at the back on the left leads outdoors. Through this doorway can be seen a crude string lattice-work partly covered by a growing vine, and a shelf supporting a bucket and gourd. A small window is at the right in the back wall. The floor and walls are bare. Everything has a fairly neat appearance but suggests the struggle against a degrading poverty.

As the curtain rises MAG WARREN is busily preparing supper, singing as she works.¹ HERMAN is sitting on the floor tying a piece of rope to the end of a broom handle.

MAG WARREN is a thin, bent, over-worked woman of forty-two. Her face reveals the strain of years of drudgery. Her thin hair is drawn tightly into a knot on the back of her head. She wears a cheap calico dress and a faded checkered apron. In the pocket of her apron is a large snuff can. A protrud-

¹ MAG'S SONG



A rich man lay on his vel - vet couch, He ate from plates of gold; A
Three years rolled by and the rich man died, He de - scend - ed to fiery hell, The

poor girl stood on the mar - ble steps, And said, "So cold, so cold."
poor girl lay in the an - gel's arms, And sighed, "All's well, all's well."

ing snuff-brush claims the right corner of her mouth.² She beats up a batter of cornbread, pours it into a pan on the stove, and after pouring some water into a large coffee-pot, she begins to slice some "fatback."³

Herman is an under-sized boy of six years with a vacant expression on his pinched face. He wears a faded shirt, and a lone suspender over his right shoulder gives scanty support for his patched pants, which strike him midway between the knee and the ankle. He is barefooted. When he finishes his "horse," he gets up, straddles the stick, and trots over all the unoccupied part of the room.

HERMAN. Git up, Kit . . . whoa . . . ha. [*whipping the stick.*] What's the matter? Cain't you plow straight?

[*In his trotting he runs into MAG at the stove. She turns on him angrily.*]

MAG. Git out'n my way an' git over thar in the corner. [*utterly subdued, HERMAN goes and sits in the corner while MAG goes on with her work; presently she turns to him.*] Go git me a turn o' wood, an' don't you take all day about it neither.

[*HERMAN goes out. MAG continues to sing, moving about between the table, stove, and cupboard as she prepares the meal.*]

[*JED SMITH enters. He is a tall, lanky, uncanny-looking fellow of twenty-four. He is dressed in the shabby shirt and faded blue overalls of an ordinary poor farm-laborer. He walks in slowly and lazily and says nothing. As he goes to the table*

MAG looks up at him from her work.]

MAG. I thought you was Will, Jed. [*she continues her work.*] Seen anything o' Pegg? Hit's a-gittin' mighty high time she's back here.

JED. [*pulls out a chair from the table, flops down in it, and begins whittling on a stick.*] That's what I come to see you about, Mag.

MAG. [*stopping her work and looking around at JED.*] Ain't nothin' happened, air there, Jed?

JED. Nothin' to git skeered about, but ol' man McDonald's boy come in from one o' them 'air colleges th' other day an' I jest seen Pegg down yonder a-talkin' to him an a-lookin' at him mighty sweet-like. 'Tain't the fust time neither.

MAG. [*goes up nearer to JED.*] So that's what's been a-keepin' her?

JED. Yeah, an' if you don't watch out, Mag, there's a tale goin' to git out an' ol' man McDonald'll drive you off'n the place.

MAG. You're right, Jed. Jest wait till me an' her pa gits through with her. We'll put a stop to it.

JED. [*nervously.*] Now don't go an' tell her I told you, Mag.

MAG. You needn't be skeered. I been a-thinkin' as much myself. She's been powerful uppity lately, but I didn't know what about. Her pa's allus said that perty face o' hern would be the ruinin' of her. Don't you know Wes McDonald wouldn't be a-havin' nothin' to do with Pegg 'lessen she was perty?

JED. Naw.

MAG. She's clear out'n his class an' ain't got sense enough to know it. [*she turns the corn cake in the pan.*] An' it's a perty way she's a-doin' you, Jed.

JED. [*drearly.*] Yeah, I reckon she ain't likin' me no more.

[*HERMAN returns with the wood and throws it in the box.*]

MAG. Ain't she said she'd marry you?

JED. Aw, she did onc't.

²The habit of "dipping snuff" is common among the poor whites of all sections of North Carolina. A twig is chewed into shreds at one end and is known as a snuff-stick or "tooth-brush." This is dipped into the powdered snuff and then rubbed over the gums and teeth. The women seem to get much satisfaction from this practice.

³"Fatback" is fat salt pork which, together with cornbread, forms the main part of the diet of "hog and hominy" eaten by poor whites the year round.

MAG. An' you're a good match for her, too. Will's a-been a-sayin' how good you are at the plow.

JED. I'd shore like to have her, Mag.

MAG. Well, if you want her you can git her, Jed. She's done a right smart o' washin' an' a-cookin' an' a-hoein' in her day an' I reckon she'll make you a good woman.

JED. I ain't a-worryin' about that.

MAG. [*looking out of the window.*] Yonder she comes now. Ain't no tellin' what fool notions that boy has been a-puttin' in her head, but you jest wait till me an' her pa gits through with her.

JED. [*rising nervously.*] Reckon I'll be a-goin' now, Mag.

MAG. Ain't you goin' to wait an' see Pegg? 'Pears like you'd be a-pushin' yourself.

JED. Naw, I . . . I'll come back after I eat.

MAG. Well, you come back. Me an' her pa'll have her in a notion then.

HERMAN. [*stops JED as he is going out.*] Gimme some terbaccer, Jed.

JED. [*feels in his pockets.*] I ain't got none, Herman. [*He goes out.*]

MAG. What'd I tell you about axin' folks for terbaccer? When you want terbaccer ax your pa for it.

HERMAN. He won't gimme none.

MAG. Well, it don't make no odds. You don't do nothin' but waste it nohow.

[*HERMAN sits down on the floor to the front and begins to play aimlessly.*]

[*PEGGY comes in, flushed and happy. She is a pretty girl of eighteen years. She has attractive features, is of medium height, slim and lively. Her hair is light and becomingly disheveled. Her dress is extremely simple but shows signs of care.*]

PEGGY. Supper ready, ma?

MAG. Cain't you see it ain't? Why ain't you been here long ago helpin' me git supper?

PEGGY. [*putting the milk bucket she has brought in with her on the table,*

she goes over to the left to hang up her bonnet.] I couldn't finish milkin' no sooner.

MAG. You needn't tell me you been a-milkin' all this time. Where you been anyhow?

PEGGY. I stopped to help Lizzie Taylor hang out her wash.

MAG. Been anywheres else?

PEGGY. No'm.

MAG. Well, git busy a-fixin' that table, an' tell me what fool notions Wes McDonald's been a-puttin' into your head.

PEGGY. [*she tries to look surprised.*] I don't know nothin' 'bout Wes McDonald, ma.

MAG. Don't you lie to your ma like that, Pegg. You think I don't know nothin' 'bout it, but you cain't fool your ma. He's been a-settin' up to you, ain't he?

PEGGY. No, ma, he ain't said nothin' to me, he . . .

MAG. Now be keeful.

PEGGY. He jest spoke to me, an' I jest axed him how he liked to go off to school an' he said he liked it an' he axed me why I wasn't goin' to school an' I told him I had to work.

MAG. Didn't he say nothin' 'bout your bein' perty?

PEGGY. [*proudly.*] Yes, he said I was perty. Said if I had book-learnin' an' lived uptown I'd be the pick o' the whole bunch.

MAG. That's what I was a-thinkin' he'd be a-puttin' into your head. You keep out'n Wes McDonald's way. He ain't a-keerin' nothin' for you and besides he'll git you into trouble. Wait till your pa hears o' this.

[*There is a silence while MAG goes on with her work.*]

PEGGY. [*looking out of the window, wistfully.*] I reckon it'd be nice to go to school.

MAG. Mebbe it is. If you'd a-been rich, schoolin' might a-done you some good, but you ain't rich an' schoolin's only for them as is rich. Me an' your pa never had no schoolin', and I reckon you can git along 'thout any yourself. [*she goes to the door and looks anx-*

iously across the fields.] Hit's high time your pa was a-gittin' home.

HERMAN. I'd like to see pa myself. Want some terbaccer.

MAG. [*comes to the front; solemnly.*] I been mighty skeered 'bout your pa ever since the doctor told him he had that 'air misery round his heart.

PEGGY. Did he say 'twas dangerous?

MAG. [*going back to the stove.*] Well, he said your pa was liable to keel over 'most any time if he ain't mighty keerful. Ol' man McDonald's got him down yonder in that 'air new ground a-bustin' roots an' it ain't a-doin' your pa no good neither.

PEGGY. I jest seen pa an' Mr. McDonald a-talkin' together an' both of 'em was mighty mad about somethin'.

MAG. I reckon your pa struck him for a raise, an' he ought to have it.—A dollar an' a quarter a day ain't enough, workin' like your pa does, but ol' man McDonald'd see your pa clear to hell afore he'd pay him a cent more. [*she goes to the door, takes the snuff-brush from her mouth and spits out the snuff; she puts the snuff-brush in her pocket, takes a drink of water from the gourd and washes her mouth out with it, spitting out the water; she speaks to PEGGY as she turns back to the stove.*] There's them cabbages your pa told you to hoe an' you ain't done it, have you?

PEGGY. No, ma, I ain't had time.

MAG. You had a-plenty o' time to let Wes McDonald put a lot o' fool notions in your head. You'll have a perty time a-tellin' your pa you ain't had time. [*there is a pause.*] Jed said as how he might come around after he's eat. Hit's a perty way you been a-treatin' Jed an' he ain't a-likin' it neither.

PEGGY. I don't care if he likes it or not. 'Tain't none o' his business.

MAG. Hit ain't? Ain't you done told him you was a-goin' to marry him?

PEGGY. I might have one't, but I've changed my mind.

MAG. [*angrily.*] What's come over you, anyhow?

PEGGY. Nothin', ma.

MAG. Well, I'd like to know what

you think you're a-goin' to do? 'Tain't every man a woman can git, an' you ought to thank the Lord Jed's given you the chanct.

PEGGY. I ain't a-wantin' it. I ain't a-goin' to marry Jed an' have to work like a dog all my life—besides, I got to love the man I marry.

MAG. [*scornfully.*] Love? What's love got to do with your bread an' meat? You been a-readin' some o' them magazines as they git down at the house. I'd like to know what you think you're goin' to do?

PEGGY. [*resolved.*] I'm goin' to git me a job up town an' be somebody!

MAG. There ain't nothin' you could do there. You was raised on a farm, an' I reckon that's jest about the place for you. You don't think you're better'n your ma, do you?

PEGGY. No, ma, but I could git me a job in the Five an' Ten Cent Store. Mary Cameron's got her a job there, an' she's a-wearin' fine clothes an' got a lot o' fellows.

MAG. Yes, an' there's a lot a-bein' said as to how she got them clothes. I tell you, me an' your pa ain't a-goin' to have nothin' like that.

PEGGY. But, ma, I—

MAG. Shet up. You behave yourself like you ought to before Jed. If you don't, you better.

PEGGY. I'll treat him all right but I ain't a-goin' to marry him.

MAG. Me an' your pa'll say if you will or not, an'—

PEGGY. The bread's a-burnin', ma!

MAG. [*running quickly across the room she jerks the bread off the stove and dumps it into a pan on the table.*] Good Lord, now don't that beat you? An' there ain't no more meal. [*she looks out of the door.*] Yonder comes your pa, too. Hurry up an' git that table laid while I git a bucket o' water.

[*She takes the pail and hurries off.*]

[WILL WARREN comes in heavily.

He is a slouchy, hump-shouldered man of fifty years. His hair is long and his face unshaven. He wears an old, dirty,

sweat-ridden black hat with a shaggy brim; a faded blue denim shirt; brown corduroy pants, worn slick, attached to a large pair of suspenders by nails; and brogan shoes with heavy gray socks falling over the top. He drags himself in and stands propped against the side of the door. His face is white and he appears entirely exhausted.]

HERMAN. [*going up to WILL.*] Gimme some terbaccer, pa. [*WILL pays no attention to him.*] Pa, gimme some terbaccer.

WILL. [*giving HERMAN a slap on the face that sends him to the floor.*] Git to hell away from me.

[*He comes into the room slowly and unsteadily, pulls off his hat and throws it into the corner, and falls into a chair by the table, breathing heavily and staring blankly. He says nothing.*]

PEGGY. [*she notices WILL's heavy breathing and is alarmed.*] What's the matter, pa, ain't you feelin' well?

WILL. [*struggling for breath.*] Gimme . . . some coffee . . . quick!

PEGGY. [*quickly pouring a cup of coffee and giving it to him; he gulps it down and appears considerably relieved.*] You ain't sick, air you, pa?

WILL. Naw. . . . It's another one o' them durned miseries round my heart. [*he gulps the coffee.*] I ain't a-goin' to work another day in that durned new ground. I told McDonald I wouldn't an' damned if I do.

MAG. [*who has now come back, and has overheard his words.*] I don't blame you for sayin' so, but there ain't no use in flyin' off'n the handle like that.

WILL. Well, I said it an' I'll do it. These here money men like McDonald think as how they can work a poor man like me to death an' pay nothin' for it neither, but durned if I don't show him.

MAG. What'd he say when you axed him fur a raise?

WILL. Aw, he said he was a-losin' money every year. He allus says that. Says he ain't a-raisin' enough to pay fur the growin' of it, but don't you reckon I know how much he's a raisin'? He's a-gittin' thirty cents a pound for his cotton an' two dollars a bushel for his corn, an' then he says he ain't a-makin' nothin'. He cain't lie to me, he's a-gittin' rich.

MAG. Course he is. Ain't he jest bought another one o' them automobiles th' other day?

WILL. Yeah, an' while him an' that no 'count boy o' his'n are a-ridin' around in it I'm yonder in that 'air new ground a-gittin' a dollar an' a quarter a day for killin' myself over them durned roots. Jest afore quittin' time I come mighty nigh givin' out.

MAG. [*she brings the cornbread and "fatback" and puts it on the table; PEGGY busies herself at the table and cupboard.*] You better take keer o' yourself. You know what the doctor told you.

WILL. Yeah, but how in the devil can I help it like things are now? I told him what's what a while ago, an' damned if I don't stick to it too. [*he looks over the table.*] What you got for supper? [*seeing the burnt bread, he picks it up and hurls it to the floor.*] What kind o' durned cookin' do you call this you're doin', anyway?

MAG. It wouldn't a-happened if Pegg hadn't been a-pesterin' me.

WILL. [*angrily to PEGGY.*] Well, what you been a-doin'?

PEGGY. Nothin', pa.

MAG. In the fust place, you told her to hoe them cabbages.

WILL. Ain't you done it?

MAG. No, she ain't done it, but she's been down yonder a-lettin' Wes McDonald put a lot of fool notions into her head about her bein' perty, an' now she says she ain't a-goin' to marry Jed.

WILL. [*savagely to PEGGY.*] You ain't, air you?

PEGGY. [*half crying but defiant.*] No, pa, I ain't. I've seen you an' ma a-workin' from sun-up to sun-down like

niggers an' jest a-makin' enough to keep us out'n the poor house, an' I ain't a-goin' to live no sich life with Jed. He couldn't do no better.

WILL. Well, durn your hide. . . .

MAG. An' she says she'll git her a job up-town like Mary Cameron's got. You know what's a-bein' said about Mary! [*to PEGGY.*] Don't you know we ain't a-goin' to have nothin' like that?

[*She shakes her finger at PEGGY.*]

PEGGY. But, ma, I . . .

WILL. Shet up. We've raised you up here an' it's us as'll say what you'll do. Jed axed you to marry him an' durn it, you'll do it, too.

PEGGY. I won't.

WILL. [*rising from the chair.*] You won't? Don't let me hear you say that again.

PEGGY. [*wildly.*] I won't, I won't, I won't!

WILL. [*in uncontrolled rage.*] Then, damn you, you can git right out'n this house right now an' . . .

MAG. Hush, Will, hush.

WILL. [*breathing heavily and struggling in his speech.*] An' don't you . . . let . . . me ever . . . see you . . . again . . .

[*Clutching his hands to his heart, he gasps, staggers backward, then falls to the floor. The women stand stunned for a moment, then MAG rushes over, kneels by him, and shakes him.*]

MAG. Will, Will, . . . answer me, Will, . . . say somethin'. [*turning to PEGGY, who has not moved, and speaking dully.*] Lord, Pegg, he's dead, . . . your pa's dead . . . he's gone. Send for somebody . . . quick!

PEGGY. [*excitedly to HERMAN.*] Run tell Mister McDonald to come here quick. He's down at the house. Go git him quick! [*HERMAN runs out; MAG, shaking with sobs, crouches over the body; her head is buried in her apron; PEGGY tries to comfort her mother.*] Don't carry on like that, ma. It ain't a-doin' no good. [*hopefully.*] Mebbe he ain't dead.

MAG. Yes, he is. He's gone. . . . Oh, Lord, . . . I knowed it'd git him.

[*JED appears at the door and stands stupefied for a moment.*]

JED. [*coming into the room.*] What's the matter? [*going nearer to the body.*] What's the matter with Will?

MAG. He's gone, Jed, he's gone. O Lord!

JED. He ain't dead, is he? Who done it?

[*JED kneels over the body and examines it for signs of life.*]

MAG rises slowly, shuffles to a chair on the other side of the table and sits sobbing.]

PEGGY. [*appealing.*] Is he dead, Jed, is he dead?

JED. I don't know. Git some camphor, quick.

[*PEGGY runs into the other room for the camphor bottle.*]

[*JOHN McDONALD enters, followed by his son, WESLEY. The farm-owner is a tall, prosperous-looking man of forty-eight. He has a hard face and stern, overbearing manner. WESLEY is a rather handsome young fellow of twenty-one, a typical well-dressed college boy.*]

McDONALD. [*to JED, taking in the scene at a glance.*] What's the matter? Is he dead?

JED. [*rising.*] I believe he is, Mister McDonald.

McDONALD. How did it happen?

JED. I don't know.

MAG. [*sobbing.*] He's gone, Mister McDonald, he's gone. . . . He had another one of them fits with his heart jest like the doctor said he would, an' he went all of a sudden afore I knowed it.

McDONALD. [*examining the body.*] Well, he's dead all right, sure. [*PEGGY runs in with the camphor bottle.*] That's no use, he's dead. Jed, let's put him on the bed in the other room.

[*They carry the body off the stage, MAG following.*]

WESLEY. I'm awfully sorry, Peggy. Tell me how it happened.

PEGGY. [*crying.*] He got mad with me because I said I wouldn't marry Jed, an' he jest got madder an' madder an' told me to leave an' never come back. An' then he put his hands up to his heart like this, an' fell over.

WESLEY. Did he have heart trouble?

PEGGY. Yeah, I reckon so. He's been a-havin' pains in his side, an' a-chokin' for wind, an' the doctor said he'd have to be keerful.

WESLEY. And he wanted you to marry Jed?

PEGGY. Yeah, he said I'd have to.

WESLEY. [*understandingly.*] And you didn't want to?

PEGGY. No, if I married him I'd have to work like a dog all my life, an' I ain't a-goin' to do it.

WESLEY. I don't blame you, Peggy, but what are you going to do?

PEGGY. I'm goin' to git me a job up-town.

WESLEY. You mustn't go there, Peggy. You couldn't get along there.

PEGGY. [*looking at him wistfully.*] Well, what can I do?

WESLEY. [*thoughtfully.*] I don't know. . . . I guess you'd better marry Jed. [*there is a pause; PEGGY goes over to the window and looks out hopelessly.*] If everything was different I'd . . . Oh, I didn't mean that. You see such a thing would be impossible.

PEGGY. [*turning to him, hopefully.*] But I could . . .

WESLEY. Stop, Peggy. . . . I think a lot of you but don't you see I couldn't do more? It's impossible. Don't cry that way, Peggy. I'm sorry I said what I did this afternoon. I didn't mean to upset you like this. Go on and marry Jed. He's all right and I'll see that he gets a good showing.

PEGGY. [*desperately.*] But I don't want to. I know how it'll turn out.

[*McDONALD and JED return, followed by MAG.*]

MAG. [*without hope.*] What's a-goin' to come of us now?

McDONALD. [*brusquely.*] I don't know, Mag.

MAG. You ain't a-goin' to make us leave, air you?

McDONALD. Let's not talk about that now.

MAG. But tell me, Mister McDonald, will we have to leave?

McDONALD. [*impatient.*] Well, if you must know right now, Mag, I'm sorry to say it, but I don't see how I can keep you here.

MAG. [*imploring him.*] For God's sake, don't make us leave the place!

McDONALD. Now don't get foolish, Mag. You see it's a business proposition with me. With Will gone there's nothing you and your family could do on the farm that would pay me to keep you here. It's the man I need, especially now when there is so much plowing to be done, and as soon as I can I will have to get another man to take Will's place. Of course he will have to live in this house.

MAG. [*resentful.*] After Will has worked for you steady for sixteen year you ain't a-goin' to turn me out, air you?

McDONALD. You ought to be thankful for what I've done for Will. He was about the sorriest hand I ever had. There's absolutely nothing you can do. I can't keep you.

WESLEY. But, father, you can't turn them away like this.

McDONALD. It's time you were learning that business is not a charitable institution, Wesley. I'm trying to run a farm, not a hard-luck asylum.

JED. Mister McDonald, let me see you a minute.

[*He goes over and whispers to McDonald.*]

McDONALD. [*to JED.*] Well, if you do that everything will be all right! [*PEGGY looks up hopefully; he turns to MAG.*] Jed has just said that if Peggy would marry him he will let you and the boy stay here in the house with them. If you want to do that it will be all right with me.

[*PEGGY, disheartened, sits down by the table and buries her head in her arms, crying.*]

MAG. You'll marry Jed, won't you, Pegg? You'll do it for your ma, won't you?

McDONALD. Well, I'll leave that for you to decide. You can let me know later. [*going to the door.*] Come, Wesley. I'll send to town for something to put him in, and Jed can get help to dig the grave. If you want anything, let me know.

[McDONALD and WESLEY go out. WESLEY hesitates in the door a moment, looking with sympathy at PEGGY.]

JED. [*he goes slowly and uneasily*

over to PEGGY.] You ain't a-goin' to turn me down, air you, Peggy?

MAG. [*imploring.*] You'll marry Jed, won't you, Pegg? You ain't a-goin' to see your ol' ma go to the poorhouse, air you, Pegg?

PEGGY. [*after a moment of silence she raises her head and speaks in broken sobs.*] I reckon . . . it's the only way . . . for me.

[*Curtain.*]

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